

# FAITH FOR THE COLLEGE MAN

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MARTYN SUMMERBELL

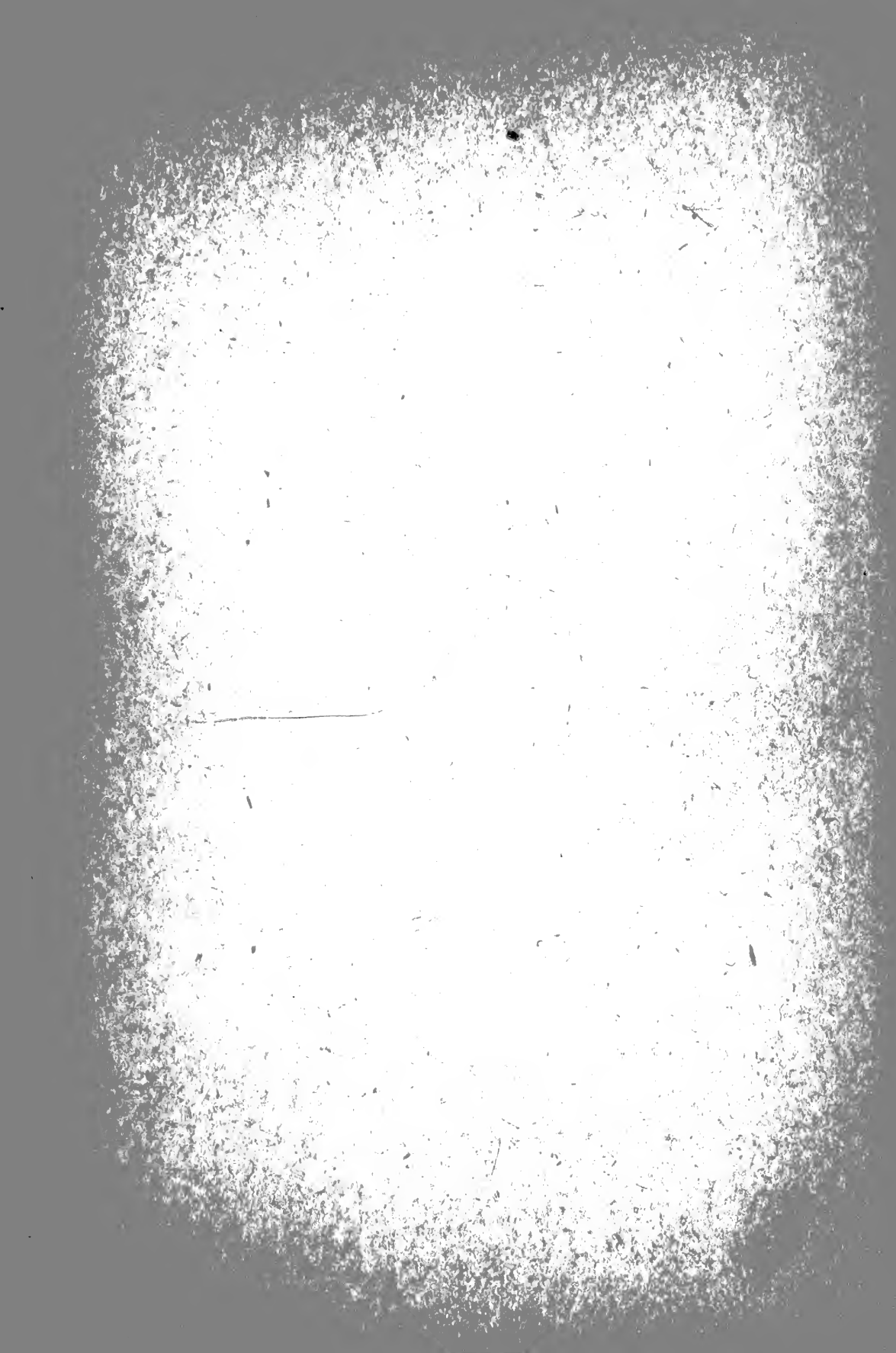


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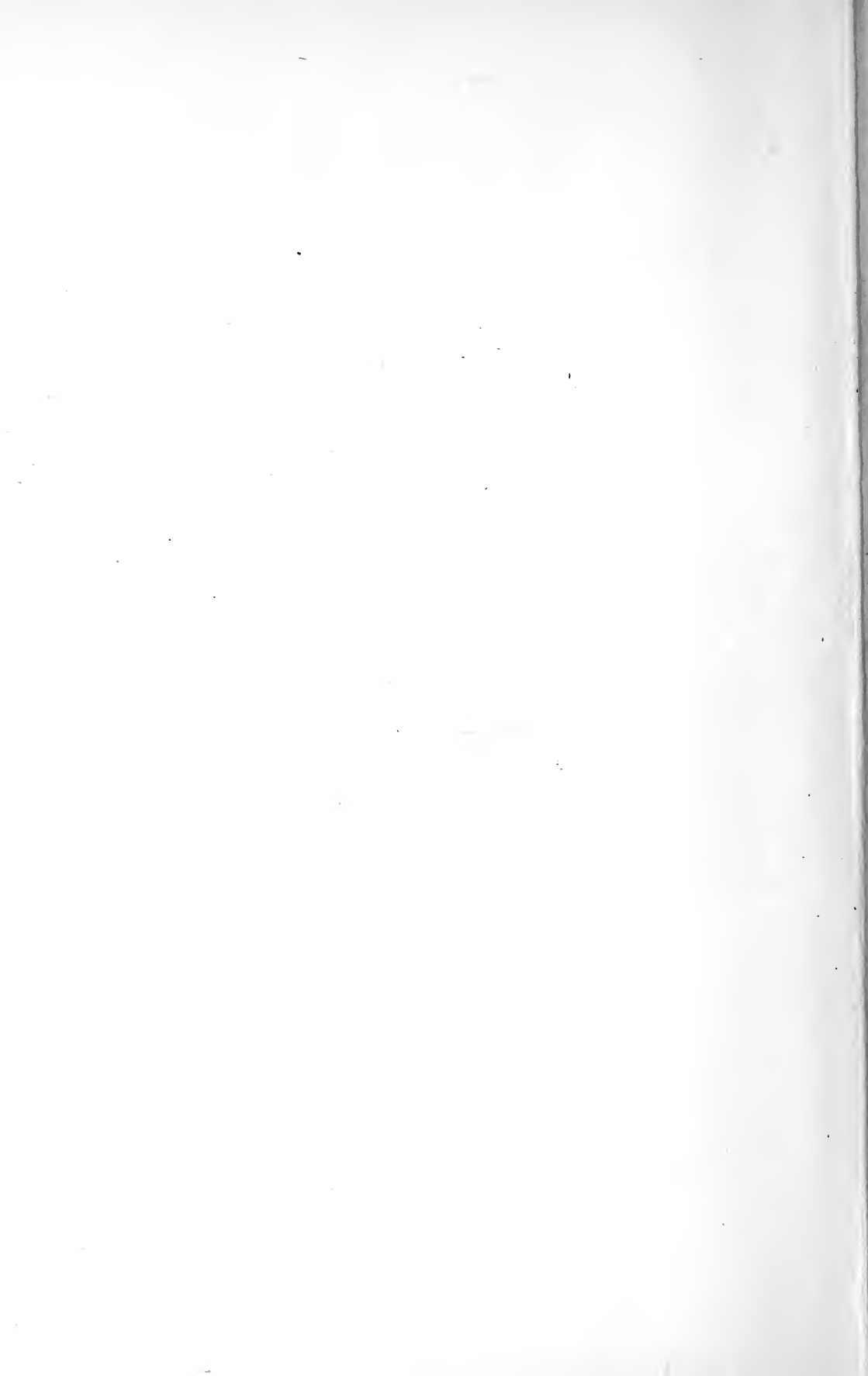






*Gustav Sumner Bell*

# FAITH FOR THE COLLEGE MAN



# Faith for the College Man

*College Sermons*

BY

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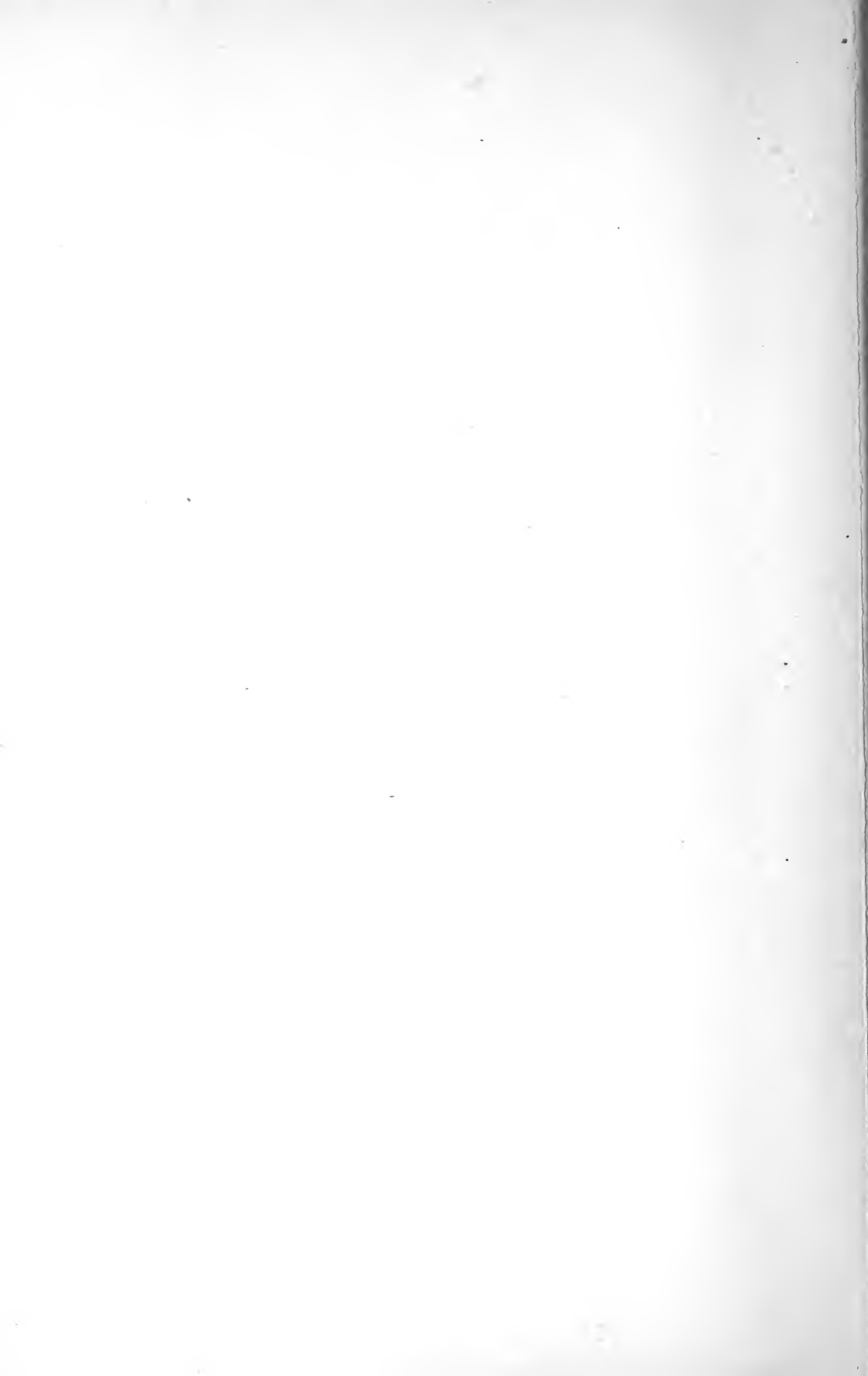
## PREFACE

THE hearty reception by the religious press and by ministers of several denominations given to the former volume of college sermons has encouraged the issue of this modest book. In these discourses to college students there has been no effort at mystification, but rather the desire to state plain gospel truths in a manner to interest and strengthen the faith of the hearers in the simple religion of Jesus.

If any of these have been assisted to the deeper trust in their Savior, and a more active service for the kingdom the object of the preacher has been attained.

MARTYN SUMMERBELL.

*Lakemont, N. Y., July 1, 1915.*





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# THE FAITH IN REVELATION



## I.

### THE FAITH IN REVELATION

EXODUS 3: 5—"Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

**H**ERE is a picture which appeals strongly to any imaginative soul, but particularly so to the student who is eager to understand the course of history, and to pursue investigation of the influences which move the souls of men. Moses, the servant of God, bends before the burning bush. The wildness of the mountain renders the scene as weird as the gathering of the witches in Macbeth; but while that is uncanny and blood-curdling, at this sight the soul experiences a solemn awe, which all the remoteness of thirty-three generations cannot efface. The grand old crags are lonesome in their silence of isolation. It is with mountains as with men. Some are friendly and sociable. They invite acquaintance and draw you toward them with a subtle charm. But others repel. They retreat behind a barrier of self-sufficiency, as if to warn all intruders to keep their distance. So it is with Sinai. Its jutting peaks of flinty granite or glowing porphyry tower like sentinels over grim chasms that gape with menace of destruction. Here is none of that friendly retirement, fitted for pleasant and restful

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meditation, which comes from the outlook through spreading forest and over gentle lakelets, such as stir the tourist with sweet surprise in Upper Westmoreland, or in our own Adirondacks or Catskills; for the mountain side is bare. Here and there the scanty vegetation struggles for existence, and is limited to bunches of grasses, herbs, and stunted shrubs. From their grandeur and desolation travelers have called these elevations of the Sinaitic desert, "The Alps Unclothed." One of our great historians of the past—Ebers—has said that if it were his duty to illustrate Dante's poem, *The Inferno*, he would have pitched his camp stool here, "*for there could never be wanting to the limner of the dark abyss of the pit, landscapes savage, terribly, immeasurably sad, unutterably wild, unapproachably grand and awful.*" It is the abode of silence, the trysting place where one may wrestle with troublous questions or ponder the solution of perplexities, and, thinking great thoughts attain to grand resolves.

And the man. One solitary watcher penetrates these fastnesses, which are seldom trodden by human foot. Leading his flock to pasturage Moses has been forced from the aridness of the plain to push up into the hills where he searches out the remnants of herbage along the torrent beds, where the moisture lingers longest. Though solitary, Moses fits the scene. Majestic in stature and full of dignity—you cannot think of him otherwise—towering like the crags about him, he moves in solemn thought. What great questions weigh him down; questions of duty, questions of honor, questions of God's providential care. He recalls his

race back in Egypt, where they are suffering in bitter bondage. He had come to their aid with all the warmth of a generous nature, but they had thrust him away. From his intervention in their behalf Israel had gained no respite of burdens, and he had forfeited long cherished friendships, established fortune, a prospective throne, and as a result of it all here he is in ignominious exile. As one man, unsupported, what can he offer for the relief of his people whom still he loves?

And then the wonder! In upon his abstracted senses steals an unwonted sight. In the trackless desert, a flame! In the uninhabited wilderness, a blazing bush! And, greater wonder still; for though it burns, it is not burning. Lambent tongues of increasing fire curl about twig and bough, and yet when he looks for the twig to shrivel in the consuming heat, or for the bough to fall, they still are there. Astonishment piques curiosity. For the bush is the *s'neh* of the desert, the dry and tindery acacia, which naturally flashes when kindled into an instant flame, and then, tinder-like, is as instantly gone. But the blaze harms this bush no more than if it were the brick arch of a temple. The phenomenon is so marked as to summon him from his meditations and rouse him to search out the causes. *"I will now turn aside,"* says he, *"and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."* But as he approaches, behold, a greater wonder! Out of the midst of the flame, a voice! So far, and no further! *"Draw not nigh hither,"* such the voice, *"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."*

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At this the soul of the stalwart Moses trembles. He has no fear in all the awfulness of nature, but he does shrink in the presence of the living God. You read in the Scripture, "*And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.*"

Out of the midst of the flame of this burning bush we may to-day read a blessed truth, no less than that of the Divine presence, of God from the heavens reaching down to His servant man.

There are seasons in life, alternations of darkness with the light, when calamity follows calamity, as wave in the ocean chases wave, until from sheer exhaustion the weary struggler loses breath and courage.

There are private griefs and disturbances which plague us by day and make the night a sorrow. There are bitter enmities and perplexing disappointments. The tongue of malice wounds us. Great losses befall. Every path that we follow seems hedged up against progress, and we cannot break down the barriers.

Or, we are bending under the burden of public care. What evils we face, and how gigantic! Iniquity is intrenched in power. Given any vice, and the worse it is, the mightier the resources at its command. Sit in your parlor and map out the campaign for cleansing out the moral plague spots of a great city. How simple the task! Good people, respectable, who hate iniquity: plenty of them! Officers of the law, civil officers of the town, judges, police; all constituted for this very thing! The machinery is all ready at one's hand. God is in heaven, God, who looks on sin with not the least degree of allowance; in whose nostrils all



sin is a continual offense. Surely, there needs but the touch, the word, and all these powers will strike hands for the immediate overthrow of any form of evil-doing. So it may appear to the inexperienced, but when you step down from your easy chair to inaugurate your campaign you find the task far from being so simple. You approach the friends of virtue and solicit their cooperation, but find them free with counsel, and slow in actual aid, financial or other. And what counsel they are willing to impart is mostly on the side of discouragement. Each has his own concerns, his pleasures, his business, his household, and these absorb all his energies; and beside that your campaign if carried through is certain to offend some one in whom he has an interest. So he pats you on the back, but does not enlist in your company.

From him you turn to the officers of the law, to the men who are paid by the city or by the state to attend to this very thing; but they also are prodigal with excuses. Law! I venerate the word. The protection which the state supplies to the persons and property of its citizens is wonderful. But again, how much is left undone! Individual offenders are now and then swept up in the legal net; but for all that there remains in all our cities a great criminal class, which is a reproach to our civilization. Public officials frequently enforce the laws which it seems popular to enforce, but the others which they are not pressed to enforce they neglect. Constantly they are closing their eyes to the existence of great evils, which they are inclined to call "necessary evils." Under such rebuffs patience almost gives

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way. But still there is God. You can pray. You turn to your closet and there you pour out your soul for the tide of wickedness to be stayed, and for the right to triumph. What results? Humanity still groans, being burdened. Your prayer is not answered and the heavens are as brass.

Some such experience befalls every soul that is charged with a sense of high mission. First there comes the flush of enthusiasm; then the settling down to zealous labor, and then lower the shadows of doubt, loneliness, and disappointment.

What travail for Elijah all those years when he regarded himself as the only believer in a nation of idolaters! What a desolate time for Paul, and Luther, and Wesley, and Edwards, and Judson, before they could enlist helpers to see truth with their eyes! What agony in the soul of Jesus, as He knelt in the garden, and when later, in the shadow of the cross he exclaimed, "*My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*"

And yet, for all our doubtings, God is nearer than we think. Israel might groan and implore, and in the bitterness of increasing bondage, might imagine that God had forgotten.

And Moses, in the desperation of his personal fortunes, might suppose the same. What change for him from the courtly circles of the palace to herding sheep in the wilderness. And how tedious the waiting! I can think how he prayed the first year, and the second year, and the fifth year, and the tenth year. But how about the twentieth and the thirtieth year? And this is now the fortieth year, and life is slipping away, and this man of commanding talents, of untiring zeal, of multi-

form learning, is buried in this solitude! Forty years of climbing these rugged peaks! Forty years of following the lambs down into the abysses. Forty years of protecting the flocks from ravening beasts! Is this the life of faith and self-sacrifice? Has God forgotten?

And yet for all the loneliness God was there in the desolate wilderness. When most He seemed far away He was close at hand. And it is so to-day. Sometimes it is needful to wait. Our measures are crude, our plans faulty, our purposes misguided. Time must ripen away the crudeness and bring unity of action. But all the while God is hearing and is bringing relief. The Christian believes devoutly in God. I am walking down these aisles of time with a growing sense of the Divine immanence.— Though a lonely wanderer, I lift my hand and I touch infinitude. In my prayer closet, God is there. At my desk, God is there. As I enter the pulpit, God is there. And so to me and to you, every incident, even the most trivial; every circumstance, however discouraging in appearance, may become the medium of cheer and blessing. Many a withered bush, esteemed by men as mean and worthless, may glow with God's presence and God's promise, and bring to the soul the comfort of a lively hope.

From the burning bush flashes also this kindred truth, not only that God reaches men, but that He reaches mind. Beside upholding the world by His arm of power, He makes Himself known to His people. He declares His presence. He communicates His will.

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Am I told that there is an opposite view. Are there some who sneer at the beautiful stories of the Old Testament revelation, and are there others who explain them away as being natural events touched up by the vivid imagination of the oriental mind; and are there others still who hope against hope, and through many fears desire that somewhere in it all they may discover some remnant of truth? These tales of the Exodus, of the Plagues of Egypt, of the Crossing of the Sea, of the Manna from Heaven, of the Waters Gushing from the Flinty Rock; our fathers believed them all and had great comfort in their confidence in God.

But what are these doubts that so many cherish, open or concealed; and whither do they lead? Likely enough one can so interpret the sacred Scripture as to introduce a seeming consistency in the narrative by explaining away the miraculous. Say that the incident was colored by a vivid imagination. Suggest natural causes for all unusual events. Insist that the sun gleamed on a bush and that Moses was so innocent that he mistook it for a gleam of fire! Make it plain that Aaron's rod was so crooked that Pharaoh thought it must be a serpent and was afraid! Point out that a strong wind must have blown the Red Sea dry at a time of low tide! Wherever the Scripture tells of a miracle declare that it is merely a figure of speech! Where the Bible mentions that an angel spoke to Abraham or to Lot assure us that it is a rhetorical flourish! In such manner the miracles can be emptied of the miraculous, and the Scriptures can be emptied of God. But how shall we characterize such treatment? Admit we must

that the miracles offer difficulties; but for that matter what department of human life, or what branch of learning is free from some sort of difficulty? Send your child to the high school, and shall he revise all the grammars to suit his undisciplined condition, dropping out the long rules of the Latin grammar, and dismissing the bothersome sinuosities of the Greek verb? Not so at all. He has to take the Latin and the Greek as he finds them. And in our view of the case miracles are merely the irregular nouns in the grammar of omnipotence; although I imagine before we are through with them we shall find them far more numerous than we have suspected, and quite the regular nouns of God's administration. Eliminate the difficult, the wonderful things, from history! It is possible, but whenever it is attempted we shall find, as stated in the words of another, that "*if we do not understand God's ways with man, we shall at least clearly see what are man's ways with God, and with His revelation.*"

But I was asking whither all this explaining away is to lead. It all focusses to a single point, the denial that God reaches His people; the denial that the Divine Mind reaches the human mind; the denial that the Divine Spirit communicates in any way, or by any channel, with the human spirit.

Now I am not anxious to make a new definition of a miracle, though I confess that I am disinclined to be bound up too tight by the definitions given by others. But this I am willing to stand by and declare that if the Divine Mind is to reach the human mind at all, it must be through what we

are accustomed to style as miracle. If God sends bread from heaven to feed the needy thousands of Israel in the desert, that is a miracle. If Abraham has a vision in the night, which bids him to get out of the land of his fathers, that is a miracle. If God sends His Son into the world to teach it and to redeem it, that too is miracle. For the miracle is the bridge which permits the Divine to pass over and come into contact with the human mind. It is the medium for communicating the Divine power or the Divine purpose. How shall God reach man? Shall He write a letter, and seal it with the great seal of heaven, and fold it into an envelop and drop it into the United States mail? You do not discover a miracle recorded between the two lids of the Bible that is greater than such a miracle would be. Shall God touch the soul of man, firing it with new purpose in the line of His great plans and writing on it nobler views of duty and consecration? But that would be miracle also.

Here is the whole question in a nutshell. God can communicate with His people, or He cannot. Who shall aver that He cannot? Have you ever struggled in dreams with a feeling of utter helplessness, anxious to accomplish somewhat, but always restrained? You dream of the carriage in which you would ride, but it rolls away just as you get your foot on the step. You dream of the friend whom you would greet, but just as you are about to speak to him he vanishes from sight. What torture is such an experience! How glad you are when you waken and realize that it was nothing but a dream! After that who will be so

venturesome as to declare that a state like that is the normal thing with the great God of the universe; that He may wish to help His people, but cannot; that He has so bound Himself up in the laws of His own making that He cannot lift a finger for their relief, or that He cannot speak a word to them that they can hear? Away with such a thought! If ever there was a place where it would be right to be skeptical it is just here. We will not believe of the Almighty that He has ever excavated an abyss so profound that His grace cannot cross it, or that He has erected any barrier of natural law to such towering height that Infinite Love cannot overleap it and bring some swift message for our knowledge and redemption. But when you say that, you have settled the whole case of the miracle. A Divine religion in its establishment and maintenance has a place for the miraculous. This the Christian believes and is steadfast in the confession of his belief. God determines to send His servant Moses to Egypt. He speaks to this messenger from the burning bush. He gives into his hand signs and wonders so that Pharaoh may know, so that all Israel may know, so that the whole world shall know that God has given him his high commission, and made him His accredited ambassador from the Court of Heaven.

From the burning bush comes also a voice of reverence. God impresses His servant's heart. "*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet,*" so says the angel, "*for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*"

No temple there with towering spire or lustrous dome. No modest shrine. Nothing more than a

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desert bush aflame with the presence of God. But God consecrates the place. Holy ground! Off then with the sandals! Hide the face! Bow in reverential adoration! This devotion you observe reaches the outward act. "*Put off thy shoes!*" In the east for the expression of respect they uncover the feet, as we in the west for the same purpose uncover the head. The priests in the tabernacle and in the temple served at the altar, or bore the ark of the covenant with feet unshod. Moses in the desert, as he draws near to God must come with the outward tokens and posture of devotion.

Is there question why this should be so? Why bow the head? Why bend the knee? Why loose the sandal? What need of the outward sign when the heart prostrates itself before God? Moses might worship in his heart. Is not that enough? No others are here. He is alone with God. Why ask more than that he feel reverential? And yet here is the plain command, "*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*"

And this was the right thing to do, for after all that might be said there is much that is due to place and circumstance. Conduct which might be appropriate for the street, or for the concert room, or for the parlor of a friend, is not appropriate for the house of God. I enter the sanctuary on the Sabbath day. It is holy ground. Sacred associations are knit into every part of it; into the pulpit, where the gospel has been preached; into the choir, whence have ascended such triumphal songs of glory; into the pews, where the veterans of the



cross have taken their places and worshiped. What comfort has been experienced here by struggling souls, what consolation to mourners, what pardon to sinners, what special manifestations of reviving grace to penitent souls when they were seeking after God! What consorts with a place like that? Certainly nothing that is gloomy. That was one trouble with the religion of Egypt. No doubt, according to what we learn from the monuments, there were priests of Egypt who worshiped the one true God, but they did not impart that knowledge to the people whom they suffered to be idolaters, and whom they taught to worship after a ritual which was sombre and funereal in all its accessories and effects. Christians banish such thoughts from the house of prayer. Make religion gloomy, and you freeze devotion to death, with high sounding respectability for its winding sheet. Rather than that, make religion a delight! Let the vaulted arches ring with triumphal anthems. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Let the air be so laden with inspiration and aspiration, that every soul that comes under the holy influence shall say, *"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."*

But all this gladness should be on the lofty plane of worship. It should be happy, but not frivolous. It should be uplifting, not relaxing. The altar is not a stage, and is not even a platform. True worship to God is not a spectacle, is not a gaudy show. No place then in the house of God for noise and confusion. No place for idle titterings and gigglings. No place for merriment and folly. Holy ground!

*"Lo, God is here, let us adore,  
And humbly bow before His face.  
Let all within us feel His power,  
Let all within us seek His grace."*

But beyond the place something is due the soul itself. Reverence is an emotion. It is then subject to culture. Our feelings are sometimes supposed to be spontaneous. We fear, we admire, we love spontaneously. But there is a difference in feelings. Some emotions, if I may so speak, are naturally spontaneous and others become spontaneous from culture. We acquire tastes and train emotions. The artistic sense can develop under culture till the varied tints of the forest and the shifting hues of the evening sky, to which we once gave the casual glance, become occasions of the most exquisite pleasure. It is similar with the worshipful spirit. This may be crushed in its beginnings, or it may be cherished till it becomes a second nature, and a wellspring of serene and constant joy.

Right here it is that the college man of the day is open to a temptation which may work upon his spirit an infinite mischief. He lives in an atmosphere which has slight regard for what has been established, and he is ever on the lookout for novelties in thought and expression. In certain college sets there is a strong current which runs counter to reverence, to adoration, to worship, and which inclines to turn all these into occasions for idle jestings and ridicule. The unreverential person may distribute his engagements in such a manner as to avoid the gatherings for social worship, and to escape the hallowed moments spent by the

Christian at the table of His Lord. Culture of the soul in religion may be neglected. All those scenes and occasions which incline the soul to bow before God may be voted a tedious bore. Were the bush in the desert to blaze again with the presence of Divinity, would it be strange if the soul that had trained itself to religious indifference should turn its back upon the privilege of communion with its Maker?

But for our student there is the more excellent way. Enjoyment of devotion comes with exercise, and the reverential spirit increases with observance of the outward forms of reverence. Prince Bismarck doubtless owed much of his success in life to the sagacious counsel of his father, who once rebuked him sharply for his irreverence to the throne. While but a boy he had indulged his levity by speaking of the emperor as "Fritz." "*Learn to speak reverently of His Majesty,*" said he, "*and you will grow accustomed to think of him with reverence.*" The lesson took effect. Bismarck learned to think and to speak reverently of the throne, and the loyalty of his heart gave him the impulse which brought to pass the unity of the Fatherland.

If to speak reverently of earthly dignities is profitable, how much more so will it be with God. Said the Psalmist, "*O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker.*" The worshipful attitude induces the worshipful spirit. In one of our southern States a young lady begged of a traveling preacher a book which he carried in his saddle bag, and which had struck her fancy. "*I will give it to you willingly,*"

said he, "*provided you promise me to pray God every night to make you a Christian.*" She was solemnized by the condition, but she made the pledge. When he came back after the four weeks had passed the whole current of her life was changed. She had kept her promise. She had bowed in prayer, and God had touched her heart with sovereign grace. Four weeks she had prayed because she had given her word. Now she prayed because she had pledged her heart.

The bush burning on the mountainside called Moses from leading the flock to leading a mighty nation. But more than that it stands for us as a perpetual memorial of God reaching down to man, of God reaching the mind of man and of God touching the heart of man.

He who spoke to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush speaks to us also. Possibly the manifestations may be different, different to us, and different to every one of us. But let the light come as it may, by outward sign, by the teaching of His Holy Word, or by the revelation of His grace in His Son our Lord, or by the inward torch of truth, the conviction of duty in the silent recesses of the heart, be it ours to accept the light, to do the work and to expect the full manifestation of His glory.

We too may hear the voice of the angel, "*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*"

# **THE FAITH REVEALED IN CHRIST**



## II.

### THE FAITH REVEALED IN CHRIST

HEBREWS 1: 1, 2—"God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son."

**T**HE writer of this epistle opens his masterly argument by the statement of two fundamental propositions.

The first of these is in the first verse of the chapter, where he declares that God hath spoken to His people. This thought was welcome to the Jewish mind. The Jew was trained from childhood to believe in God, in a God who could hear prayer and answer it; in a God who could sympathize with his sorrows and lift a mighty arm for his deliverance.

Some things cannot be argued away. You exist. No trickster in words can convince you that you are not alive or that you are somebody else than yourself. You may not say with Descartes, "I think, therefore I am," but you are positively assured of the fact that you are alive, you, yourself. That matter is past the shadow of a doubt.

So you know your own experiences. You take a little trip to Boston and enjoy yourself hugely. When you get back home, some one in your hearing ventures the suggestion that Boston is a very

regular town, since it is all laid out at right angles. But after your personal experience with Boston you speak right up and remark that your friend must have been thinking of Philadelphia, for you had found Boston so far from regular that you had lost yourself inside of half an hour. You are almost ready to accept the old explanation that the Boston streets were laid out on the old cow paths, since they wander so much here and there. In an instance like that you feel that your own experience is conclusive, that seeing is believing.

Nations similarly acquire a national experience, which is as firm and vivid, and possibly even more so than the individual experience. With the years there grows up a national consciousness. Historical facts enter into and become a part of a nation's life. George Washington was born in Virginia; he became the General, the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Armies, and when the nation was ready to stand on its feet, he was elected the first President of the United States. Now if some doubter were to come along and endeavor to persuade you that you do not really know anything about George Washington, because you never saw him, and that possibly the whole story is a myth, a sort of glorified tradition, a development of the national pride, and a personification of the American spirit which creates for itself an imaginary hero, what will you say to that? Will his hypothesis shake your historical conviction as to the reality of George Washington? Not in the least degree. You will tell him that his brilliant hypothesis is all stuff and nonsense. If you did not see Washington for yourself, the



nation saw him. The nation honored him. The nation triumphed in his triumph.

And a like national experience came to every child of Israel. They all knew Abraham, and Moses, and Elijah, just as you know Christopher Columbus, George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln. The Jew recognized the heroes of his race, not only as great men, but also as prophets of God. The Almighty had intrusted to them a message for His children. They spoke God's words. The Decalogue was God's law. The Tabernacle service was patterned according to the divine arrangement. The fiery eloquence of the prophets, of Isaiah, and Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, was kindled at God's holy altar. The writer of this epistle was striking a very sympathetic and responsive chord when he declared that God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.

In this speech of "fathers" and "prophets," the reference is doubtless to God's revelations to Israel. Yet there were other revelations which were no less divine. The Scripture teaches that God counseled with Job. Who was Job? Certainly he was never a Jew. With equal assurance we can affirm that he was a prince of Idumea, Edom, and possibly a direct progenitor of Herod the Great. As told in the Genesis story we observe that God's presence and blessing were conspicuously lavished upon Melchisedek. But who was Melchisedek? Certainly he too was never a Jew. He was king of Salem, a Gentile, and yet Melchisedek was so much greater than Abraham that this friend of God bows down before him and pays him tithes and reverence. In a later day

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God speaks of Cyrus as His "anointed" and His "messiah." But who was Cyrus? Obviously he was not a Jew, but a Persian Gentile, a pagan. And yet it was this same Persian king whom God commissioned to save the Jewish name and to command the rebuilding of the Temple on Zion.

Now what the Bible declares of God's leading for such eminent souls, though they were altogether outside of the Jewish race, I may confidently apply to the good and great of every clime and of every age. With me it is a favorite reflection that God is stirring in every great movement that tends toward progress, to national uplifting. The Creator is speaking to and through His creatures. Differences there will be, and there must be. Play the same melody on various instruments, and because the flute is not the cornet, and the harp is not the organ, you will hear a differing quality of sound, but each instrument will carry the same melody, while the most perfect among them will give melody, and harmony, with the added power of the over and under tones. It is much the same, so I take it, with inspiration. Among the writers of Scripture you remark differences of style and language which you will refer to what we call the personal element. Moses is a master-mind who proves on every page the thoroughness of his scholarly training, while Amos breathes the simplicity of the plow. Paul is the accomplished rhetorician; Peter is the impetuous man, who has been trained less in the school than the fishing boat. In the light of such examples we may perceive how God is speaking to mankind at large. The Infinite Mind is behind all

great achievements of human thought. Whence come these tidal waves of reformation, which turn the world upside down to its great advantage? Their source is in the power and will of Almighty God. The surpassing works, which men will not willingly let die, are God-begotten; are scintillations of genius; are sparks from the celestial altar. The painters, the sculptors, the authors, the philosophers, who by common consent outrank their kind have not studied the secret of their art. A lad once came to Mozart, the great composer, and said that he wished to study musical composition. "But wait," said the great master. "But you composed when you were younger than I," was the piteous appeal. "Yes," replied Mozart, "but I did not have to ask anybody about it." Such geniuses, who do not need to ask, accomplish great things with less exertion than lesser men employ to accomplish little things. And what they do so grandly comes with the right mood. There is no driving them to their task with whip and spur. When the right moment comes, when the soul is all aflame, in its raptest flight they perform the work of centuries. I am calling such creative moments inspired. I am finding inspired men in every walk of life. To me Homer and Vergil; Praxiteles and Phidias; Socrates and Kepler had their measure of inspiration. And so Columbus and Luther; Stephenson and Edison; Wesley and Moody have had their measure of inspiration. They have been drawn toward poesy and painting and sculpture; toward discovery, and philosophy, and religion, very much as God's prophets of the olden time were drawn toward the

divine truth. Each man, according to his own capacities, and under the limitations of his peculiar field, was accomplishing more or less the purpose of God. God has never forsaken His people and He never will forsake them. Age after age He has been urging forward the material and spiritual culture of the race, and He will continue to do the same so long as the world endures.

But this thought of the apostle, that God has spoken in the past, is merely the preface to a far profounder argument. The sonorous adverbs of the Greek, which we clumsily render as "in sundry times" and "in divers manners," are indicative of the fragmentary nature of the primitive revelations. God has been speaking in genius, in poetry, in art, in the explanation of the nature of things. He has spoken by law-givers, by judges, by prophets. He has appeared to some by dreams, to others by visions, to others still by the inward voice of truth. The revelations of the past have been marked by differences. The Abrahamic worship was not the same as the Levitical. The priesthood of Aaron was a very different thing from the priesthood of Melchisedek. The moral law and the ceremonial law are quite unlike in form, and they appeal to the soul in a different manner. In important details the precepts of the patriarchs are modified by the precepts of the prophets. Truth coming in portions and through so many different channels confuses at length by the very multiplicity of the revelations. In such case what are we naturally to expect? What is the practice of the courts under similar embarrassment? In the lapse of years the judges have made thousands

on thousands of decisions, by which they have elucidated the law. Decision is piled upon decision, and case upon case. When the accumulation becomes so great that we are perplexed by the excess of legal treasure, the legislature takes a hand in the business and revises the statutes. Useless accumulations and special enactments are swept away, and what is fundamental and essential is presented in clearer light and more practical form. It is such thought of God's revelation which underlies the use of these adverbs by the apostle. God's speech in the past, so he would say, has been fragmentary, coming at sundry times and divers manners. To make His truth shine out more truly there had to be a fresh revelation. For this reason God speaks again, this time in His Son, who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. This revision of the divine law was expressed in a person. The Divine Wisdom, the heavenly Word, becomes flesh, and dwells among us, and we behold His glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Who is this messenger of the Father, the Infinite Son of the Infinite God? Who, I ask, in all the range of history is the truest interpreter of the will of Heaven? Who has sounded the profoundest depths of the human soul? Who has proposed and exemplified the purest and loftiest type of character? Who has opened most clearly and conclusively the mysteries that shadow us in this life, and that overhang the way that leads to the life to come? To all this there is a single answer. It is Jesus of Nazareth, who has dis-

cussed the weightiest themes that angels bend to study, and who has explained them in terms so clear that a child can comprehend. In Him the Jewish race has its culmination and the Temple service and the ceremonial law their solution. He has spoken, and we see displayed before us the mysteries of the kingdom, the destiny of souls and the perfect character of God. He has discussed the bounds of right and wrong, and has digged such a gulf between them that no man can bridge it without doing violence to his own conscience. Studying the glory and dignity of the revelation of Jesus Christ, I am constrained to believe that if we were to summon a world convention of ten delegates from every religion now extant, and should propose to that vast parliament to declare by vote who is the chief of all teachers, the philosopher of philosophers, the purest and noblest mind ever revealed to this poor world of ours, that there would be but one decision. The vote might be taken by a double ballot, every delegate writing first his own choice, and then a second name. Probably every delegate would write the name of his own leader for his first choice, the Turk writing the name of Mohammed; the Buddhist, Gautama; the Parsee, Zoroaster. But when the ballots were taken up, whosoever this man or that might have named for his primary choice, the one name returned overwhelmingly from that ballot would be that of Him, whom we worship as Son of God and the Savior of the world.

This Christ who bears God's message presents the importance of the future life. Here conduct and philosophy together have been all astray.

The common practice has been to care for the world that we now live in and to let the next world care for itself. Men are living for the moment, content if they have their luxuries, and hoping only for a long lease of power and a magnificent funeral. All this Christ shows to be folly. He preaches that the things which are seen are temporal, and that the things we should care for are eternal. He would have men lay up their treasures in Heaven rather than on the earth. What a picture is that He paints for us in the parable of the man who builds his great barns, and who the night they are finished is suddenly called to judgment! How vivid too that other picture of the rich man tormented, and of Lazarus the beggar rejoicing in Abraham's bosom! "What shall it profit a man," so He asks, "if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Is such teaching out of date, when we canvass the neglectfulness and religious indifference of the age? How about this pagan plan of forgetting the other life while we are hastening to grasp every passing pleasure? What philosophy this, which provides for the body and does nothing for the soul? If there be another life, what about entering it wholly unprepared? If there be a God in heaven, how about disregard of His holy law, refusal to bow the knee in worship, shutting up the heart against acknowledgment of His name? Ah, my friend, the best friend man ever had felt the burden of these obligations. He wept over the unbelief of Jerusalem, which was hurrying the Holy City to its doom. He went to the cross to declare the necessity of redemption, and to set the value of the human soul.

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Christ, who brings God's message, announces it hopefully. His word is the gospel, the good news of salvation. Immortality, eternal life; these are not far from any one of us. In their folly men have been misrepresenting the breadth and fullness of the divine love.

Some have presented a helpless God. It is related that Victor Emanuel, the first king of united Italy, once handed his prime minister a petition from a subject, and said that he had almost pledged his royal word that it would be granted. The minister glanced at it an instant and returned it with the dry word, "Sire, it is impossible." So the king returned it to the petitioner with this counsel, "Friend, you will have to get some one to sign your paper who has more influence in this kingdom than I."

So fatalists have taught that God is bound. Whatever happens, so they make out, comes to pass because it has been decreed from all eternity, so that not even Omnipotence can alter its course.

And materialists are teaching that God is bound. Natural law by their interpretation is everything, and even more powerful than God. As they point out God does not have authority enough in His kingdom to make repairs when the machinery gets out of gear. Curious is it not that fatalism and materialism strike hands together to minimize Omnipotence!

Others have presented a partial God, a God who delights in His special pets and favorites. This was the error of the Jew. "We," said they, "are the children of Abraham."



Others have presented us with an ever holy God, a God so sublimely holy that He has no place near Himself for any but the flawlessly perfect. They have no sympathy with any who have suffered temptation. Such would crush penitence under an eternity of shame.

But Jesus corrects all these misapprehensions and misrepresentations. Our God is a God of power, but is also a God of boundless love. He rules the world in righteousness, and has no respect of persons. He calls to Himself impartially both Jew and Gentile. He seeks ever to save. This is Christ's witness, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There is not a sinner on the earth but can find mercy by forsaking his sin and pleading with Christ for pardon. This is the promise, "He will save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by him."

And Christ's message teaches the value of character. It bases the joy of the life to come on the faithfulness and purity of the life that we live here and now. Is this principle sufficiently understood? Is there not current too much of an opinion that somehow death is a leveler, a blotter out of all the past, putting all men, bad, good, and indifferent on an even plane of prospect and beatitude? The lifelong saint is saved. The lifelong sinner, penitent with his latest breath, is saved. All that is everlastingly true. But that is not all of it, for some are thinking that when these are saved they will reach the same plane of spiritual experience and in heaven will find an equal joy.

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That is an opinion which I cannot share. Salvation is a life. "Follow me," so says the Savior. When men stood aloof from duty He rebuked them, saying, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" No doubt the Gospel teaches that sinners, vile sinners, may be saved when they believe. That murderer on the cross was saved when he believed. To commence a holy life is to be in the way of salvation. But to be in the way of salvation, to be saved, is one thing; and to be a complete, well-rounded Christian is quite another. The faithful John, who has loved Jesus and followed Him all his life through, is a man in Christ Jesus. The sinner who is just converted is but a babe as yet in character and knowledge. Sound reason will not justify the conclusion that a man can live a lifetime without God, that he can blaspheme His holy name year after year, that he can take to his heart every impious lie, and then at his last gasp, by reaching up his hand to the Savior, be instantly made the peer of martyr and apostle. Whosoever cometh shall be saved, sure enough, but the one who comes last is not to be set above those who have been faithful for years, but in accordance with the principles of eternal justice will take his place at the foot of the heavenly class. What time a man wastes while neglecting spiritual culture here will have to be made up hereafter. This is the counsel of the Lord, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect."

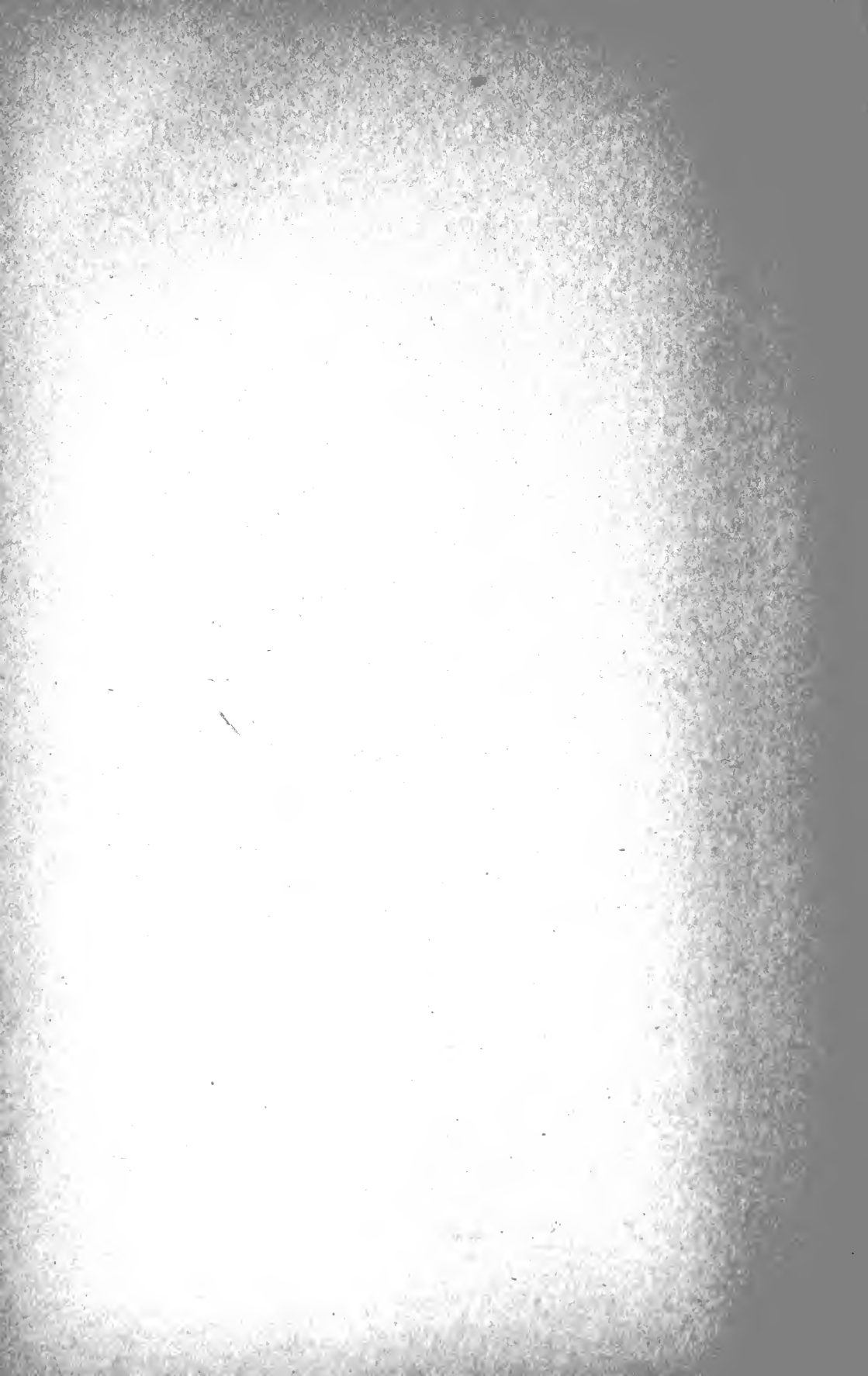
Here I may remark:

1. God hath spoken by His Son. The Divine Messenger proclaims the Divine message. Will

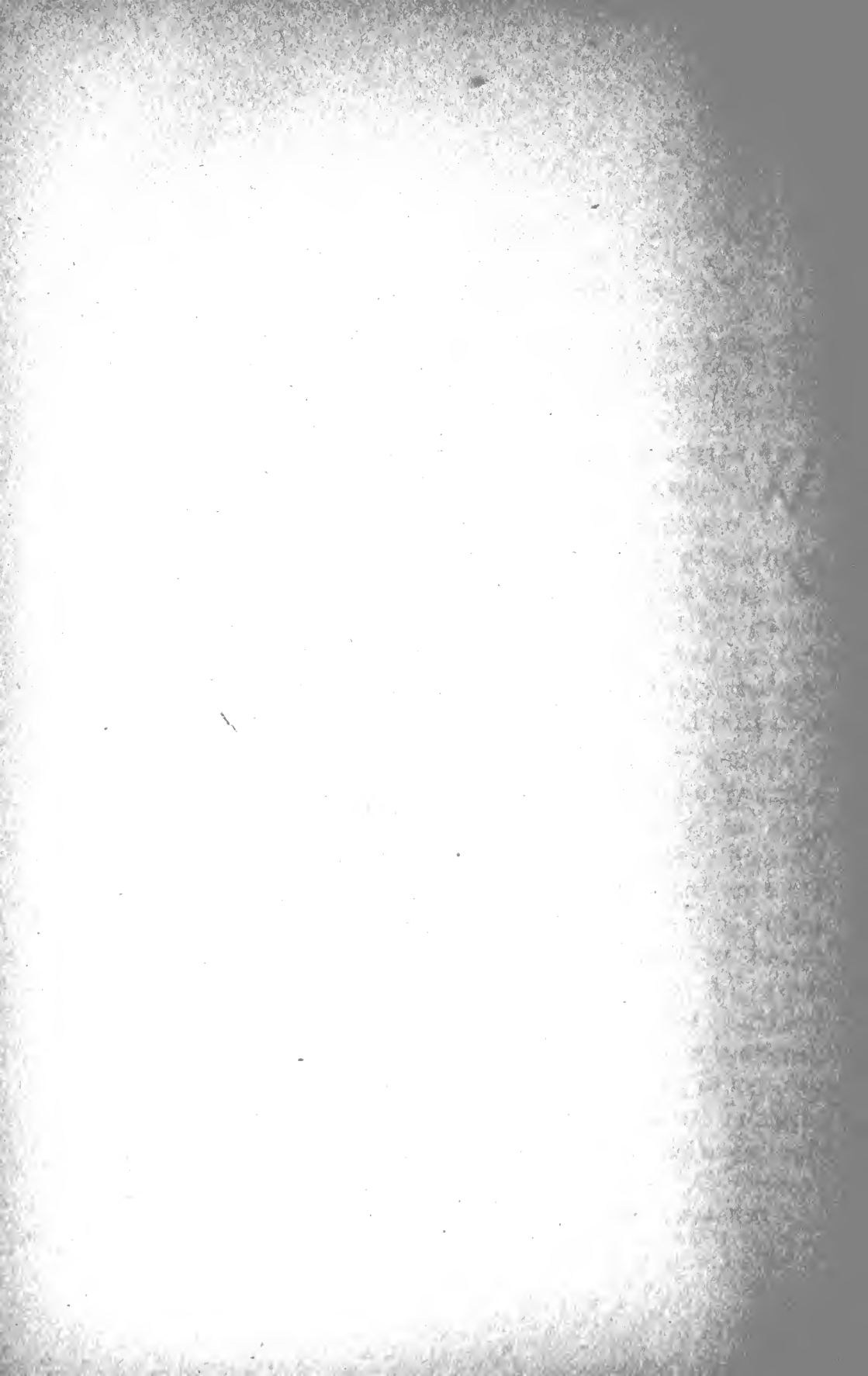
you neglect it, my brother, can you neglect it? If you do neglect it, what hope is left you? Whither will you turn for safety? What says the Scripture, "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

2. God speaks in His Son. Here is the truth and the highest truth. Of all saving truth, this will most certainly save. The very presence of Jesus affords present peace, stills the rage of passion, lifts the soul above the strife of a noisy world and grants the pledge of eternal life.

3. God speaks in His Son. In times past there were angels and prophets, but in these last days He has spoken by His Son. There is no nobler messenger to send. The gospel of Christ is the completest, the last, the final revelation. For nineteen centuries it has stood, the target of defamation, the prey of persecution, the laughing stock of unbelief; but still it stands, and it ever will stand, the refuge of faithful discipleship, till time shall be no more, and eternity opens its blessed perspectives to those who have wisely chosen the leadership of the Lord.



**FAITH CONFIRMED IN YOUTH**



### III.

## FAITH CONFIRMED IN YOUTH

ECCLESIASTES 12: 1—"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

**W**HEN the question is raised respecting the right and the wrongs of any course of action, two classes of persons are well qualified to pass judgment in the case; the good, who have responded to the call of duty; who have tasted the fruits of virtue and found them good; and the bad, who have had bitter experience for a teacher, and in manifold tribulations have discovered that the way of the transgressor is hard.

Among the good the Scripture tells us of Caleb and Joshua and their ten comrades, whom Moses sent on a scouting expedition in the land of Canaan. In a valley a little to the north of Hebron they found a region of rare fertility, where all manner of fruits of the earth were produced in abundance. The grapes particularly were of wonderful growth, and when they returned they had with them one cluster of such amazing size that they slung it on a pole, so that two could carry it between them. They had substantial proof of their story that the land was flowing with milk and honey.

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Defiance College, Ohio, March 1, 1914.

Similarly one can test the fertility of the land of personal religion. A man who has known in his own life the vivifying power of faith is privileged to speak with a voice that carries conviction.

One of the distinguished men of our nation was the late Samuel J. Randall of Pennsylvania. He represented his district in Congress for twenty-seven years, and was Speaker of the house for three terms consecutively. When he was Chairman of the Appropriations Committee he was writing one day in his committee room, while about him members of his committee and some visitors were conversing freely. Their talk rambled on from topic to topic till it drifted to philosophy and religion, in regard to which the most of them expressed very skeptical views. Apparently Mr. Randall had been occupied with his own concerns, but when a pause occurred he rose to his feet and in his masterful way exclaimed, "Gentlemen, Christianity is truth. The man who doubts it discredits his own intelligence. I have examined the matter for myself." Such a statement from Mr. Randall left nothing more to be said. And so Peter, in his Second Epistle, bases the argument for his trust in the Gospel on his personal experience. He knew it was not a shrewd fiction, for he had been with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Hear his confident exclamation, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye witnesses of his majesty." (2 Pet. 1: 16.)



The second class of persons, those who have neglected or opposed the truth, can testify of its power, since their course has brought them evil consequence which they recognize. In our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man being in torment wishes to save his brothers, who are still in the world, from coming to his place, and so implores Abraham to send Lazarus to give them warning. He knows the good, and he wishes others to follow it, even if he is past helping for himself. It is related of Mr. Hume, the English historian, philosopher and free thinker, that on one occasion he hesitated to follow his skeptical theories to their logical conclusion. He had been quite outspoken in his deistical sentiments one evening, when a young man in the company asked him, supposing he had a sister, if he would be willing to teach her such doctrines. He hesitated to reply and was pressed for the answer. Let it be remembered to Mr. Hume's credit that he yielded the point graciously by saying, "Infidelity is rather a sturdy virtue for a woman."

Ethan Allan of Vermont, the hero of Ticonderoga, was of the like mind when the question touched his own daughter. He had been a pronounced unbeliever. His daughter lay dying, and as she was facing the unknown future, she asked him if she was to believe as he had taught, or as her mother had taught her. With streaming eyes he bade her follow her mother's faith.

Solomon, the author of the text, was able to speak for both classes; for the good, who have enjoyed the benefits of goodness, and for the bad,

who have felt the pains of sin. In his early life he had been a model of princely piety, and when he was elevated to the throne, for a time he wielded the scepter of righteousness and wisdom with such loyalty to God that his fame for goodness overspread the ancient east. Afterward, sorrowful to relate, he relaxed the restraints of good conduct. He turned aside from the worship of the true God and drank to their depths every cup of unhallowed pleasure. And so it is out of both experiences, out of the personal conviction of the blessedness of righteousness, and also out of the personal conviction of the vanity of sin, that he declares at the close of this same chapter that there is but one sound rule of life. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter," so he says, "Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

It is a man like this who out of his own manifold experiences gives counsel as to the best time to enter upon the service of God. It is to be in life's morning hour, while the heart is still pure, and when the page of conduct, like the lamb at the altar, is still without spot or blemish. Then it is in the joy time of youth that the soul should be devoted to its supreme love; not to business cares or worldly distractions, but first and foremost to God. And this counsel he gives us in such classic phrase, that its echo lingers on the memory like the sound of clear bells at eventide, or like a strain from the angelic choir, "Remember!" "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw

nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

"Remember now thy Creator." Remember! Remember! Remembrance of the Creator here obviously implies recognition of the Divine authority; consideration that God is near, and that He is concerned in all our plans, in all our activities, in all our diversions.

I am quite convinced that so much about us is at loose ends, as one might say, because the heart has lost sight and thought of God. Men get astray, not so much of set purpose, not because they deliberately plan to raise the arm of rebellion against the Most High; but because they are adrift, and because they keep on drifting without heeding the strength of the current, which is a constant force flowing in the wrong direction.

There are people who are breaking the Sabbath; who turn the Day of God into a season for social visitations, for excursions, for travel, for sport. Are they all defiant transgressors? Hardly so. Possibly at the first they fell into a careless way, and the carelessness has grown upon them. They took a stroll of a Sabbath afternoon in the Park, or out into the country lanes and fields. Soon the walk became a drive with a lively horse and pleasant company. Step by step this goes on till the church with its worship, and the Sabbath day itself, are habitually neglected. That is one side of the history of Sabbath breaking. But the other side of it is that the heart had lost sight and remembrance of God; for if God had been in mind there would have been no chance for the drift to begin.

You may trace the rise and progress of what is termed "worldliness" in much the same way. Worldliness is simply the spirit that guides its conduct by current standards of occupation or enjoyment, without regard to the higher standards imposed by religion. Many who yield to this spirit cannot be said to desire to be classed with the wicked. In a merry circle some one utters a sprightly jest that cuts at the roots of a spiritual faith. Shall we assume that the speaker designed to rank himself with the scoffers and to earn the title of "infidel?" Not so, at least not so commonly. In the most of such instances the jester had not calculated results and consequences. He imagined a bright conceit, and he spoke it out as his contribution to the moment's entertainment. When the gay laugh went round his purpose was satisfied, and he dismissed it from thought as if it were all done and ended. But it was not so done and ended. Nothing in the world really has an end. All that we say or do has results and consequences which keep widening on and on for ever.

I remember when the city of Portland in Maine was known as the Forest City from the glory of its ancient elms, which were among the most magnificent in the land. On a Fourth of July a lad who was bent on a rousing celebration flung a fire-cracker into pile of shavings. Did he intend to cause a general conflagration? Never harbor such a suspicion. But a high wind was blowing, and the flames spread, and wherever they were driven by the force of the gale the elms were scorched and blasted, a quarter of the city was smoldering in ashes, and hundreds of the people

were without a roof to shelter them. The thoughtless man who utters some mocking witticism at the expense of religion is something like that. Could he trace the ultimate results he would find them infinitely mischievous. For the first, some Christian heart has been deeply wounded, and there is nothing in that for which to plume one's self. Then some other is certain to pick up the jibe and pass it along to cause further harm; and there is surely no profit there. But what touches most closely home is this, that the soul that first flew that poisoned shaft was hardened in the act, and was the more inclined to do the like again. Here too God had been forgotten. Had that young man remembered God, he would have had no inclination to make mockery of religion.

Remember! Remember! Remembrance often lays on us the tender hand of restraint. With almost any man, old or young, who has ever been blessed with a good mother, you may be sure that the one chord in his soul that will be responsive longest is that which recalls the pure saint who crooned his cradle song, who guarded his youthful steps, and who has followed him through the years with the gentle influence of her love and her daily prayers. Many a young fellow in these enticing cities all through the land will enter into some reckless diversions, and will go with his rollicking companions a part of their way, but stop short at some line which he has fixed in his mind. Right there is his limit, and no urgent persuasions, no mocking dares, will get him beyond it. What has given him the courage of such resistance? Back yonder is the home, and he

means when he returns to it, and mother comes out to greet him, and when she throws her arms about his neck, and her dear eyes look so searchingly into his, that he shall be able to return that look without flinching; and to do that he must keep his soul free and pure from flagrant sin. It is in such a way as that, the way in which we remember our mother's greeting, that we are to remember God. Simply to have Him in mind, to realize that no act of ours is unknown to Him, no secret hid; to have Him in mind in our business pursuits, in our enterprises, in our recreations, will of itself correct our follies and render us more responsible in all our relationships.

"Remember now thy Creator." Our remembrance of God is also to include thought of Him as the Maker of heaven and earth, and the bountiful Giver of every good and perfect gift. All that we have and are, with every one of us, comes through His sovereign mercy. The leaders of the world, the statesmen, the generals who have commanded great armies and won great victories, may sometimes imagine that they have fashioned their own destiny; and yet it is God who lifts up and casts down, who opens the door of opportunity, and who bestows the traits that win successes. It is God who guards, and cares for, and blesses the little child. Here is a lad who enjoys the comforts of a prosperous and happy home. He is his father's pride; his mother's idol. But with all that delightful home protection, that boy must still thank God for everything. God has given him that loving father, and that cherishing mother, and has spared them to him from day to

day. God has given him what strength he has, both of body and of mind. God is the builder of that world of beauty and of opportunity, which opens out before him; a world whose spreading landscapes tell of fruitful sowings and ample harvestings, and whose spangled dome overhead in its every twinkling star proclaims the glory of the hand that fashioned them. Every drop of dew that trembles on a blade of grass is the gift of God. Any child that springs from his couch on a spring morning to look out from his window upon the trees crowned with fragrant blossoms, who feels the pulses of the springtide leaping in his veins, the pulses that are working in all the forces of nature, must realize that it is God who is in all this new life, creating and recreating. And the God who is revealing Himself in this way in the material world, has also been revealing Himself in the care of His people, in His revelations to patriarch and prophet, and in the record of that revelation which we have in His holy book, the Bible. Some men fail to see God in that book, and they are ready to fling it away. But the book will remain long after those who deride it are gone and forgotten. Do you remember Dr. Clifford's little poem on the Bible?

Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith's door,  
 And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;  
 Then looking in, I saw upon the floor,  
 Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,  
 "To wear and batter all those hammers so?"  
 "Just one," said he; then said with twinkling eye,  
 "The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

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And so I thought the anvil of God's word  
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;  
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,  
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone.

Yes, God is the author of His book, which is still to be the comfort of the faithful from generation to generation. And He is the author of all this world poem of beauty and gladness, in blazing star, and tossing seas, and fruitful fields, and joyous life, and sweet companionships; and shall we not praise Him for the ten thousand thousand precious gifts?

But praise to God is worship. The child that looks up gratefully to say, "I thank thee, Heavenly Father, for a beautiful day," has performed an act of worship. When he bends the knee for his evening prayer and says, "Heavenly Father, I bless thee for another day of home, and of happiness," he has performed an act of worship. Remembrance of God that recognizes His mercies and lifts the voice of thanksgiving is worship.

But remembrance of God that is worshipful should advance to the service of open attachment, of avowed profession and allegiance. When Jacob met Rachel at the well and loved her at sight, it was nothing for him to devote seven years of his life as a herdsman that he might win her as a bride; and when after all that period she was not given him, he could serve for her still seven years more. In that history you have an instructive parable. The right remembrance makes no reserves of service. It does not figure up the years or the days of sacrifice. God has given us everything and shall we be so ungrateful as to



return Him nothing? All over the land we are flying the American ensign over the school-houses. What does it signify? You are training the children to the virtue of patriotism. You are having them cherish the pride of citizenship, of a share in the nationality of a great country. You explain to them what the flag means to them in the way of nurture and protection, and tell them of the open chances of life in the best country for a young man or a young woman that the sun shines on. And what do you expect of those children after you have taught them all that? Suppose you take some boy on a foreign trip and over there on that foreign shore some one points to the American flag floating over an American ship in that foreign harbor and asks him what he knows about that. Would it please you if he were to turn his back on that American flag and say that he had no concern about it. If he did that I suspect that you would tell him that he deserved to be like Philip Nolan, the man without a country; that he deserved to have America repudiate him forever.

And then shall man, the child of God, the recipient of His daily bounty, turn his back upon his Creator, condemn His religion and declare that the service of God is no concern of his. It cannot be. The heart that remembers will worship. The heart that worships rightly will worship openly; will acknowledge God and make it known to all men that he is with the church of Jesus Christ heart and soul in helping to extend the power and glory of His kingdom on the earth.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” Solomon here is insisting that the right

time to be thinking about God, and shaping one's course in obedience to the divine will, is in the budding time of childhood. Possibly this has not always been the general view. When you touch the actual profession of religion, and the acknowledgment of God by union with the church, I suspect that many have regarded that matter as of such serious import, as carrying with it such grave issues, that it were better postponed till the judgment of the child has ripened, and its definite purposes are better assured. And in accordance with that view, in many communities and churches the practice has become fixed of telling the children about God and the Bible, but of not expecting them to enter upon the Christian profession till they have knocked about the world and seen life in all its sorts and phases, and so be able to make the supreme choice for themselves without suspicion of bias or undue influence in any way. But Solomon does not consent that this is the line of wisdom. He urges that youth shall remember God in the day of the soul's strength, and while it is free from the chain of evil habit. This is what he means when he urges acceptance of God "*while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.*" He has a vision, you perceive, of the infirmities of age creeping on; of the difficulty of finding God, if one lingers till the eye is dim, and the golden bowl is ready to be broken, and the pitcher is ready to be broken at the cistern. God is just as willing to save a man in the time of his old age, but the man himself is not so willing. It requires strong resolution for the man

who has neglected God all his life to turn to Him at the last in the burden and weakness of age. All the pride of his heart rebels against altering his ways; against confessing that his course all through the years has been a sorry mistake. It is a pitiful situation! May the good Lord spare any of us from the necessity of a struggle like that!

And remembrance of God belongs to youthtime, because that is the time of purity and innocence. It is a precious offering to God when a Samuel, or a Timothy approaches the Father, with his soul undefiled by the fact or by the knowledge of sin, and says submissively, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." No doubt there is rich promise for the guilty sinner. No doubt but that Christ will save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. The promises of the Gospel are very broad. The worst sinner in this city, God has mercy for him if he will repent and turn from his evil way. But with grievous sin there are always two questions; the first, will the sinner be willing to forsake his wicked way; and the second, how much better if he had never fallen into the way that he must forsake! And the young, who begin the service of God early, escape all that. Memory has no dark plague spots which they dread to recall, remorse no sting

*For sins committed while conscience slept.*

Instead, they have the joy of looking back upon the years spent in the Master's service; years each of which has some good fruitage of help to man, and for God's great glory.

But remembrance of God in youth is best for another most important reason, for it is the day of most natural and easy service. It is the period when the hand goes most readily with the heart, when action is coincident with impulse. The hands are free from the shackles of vain or mischievous habit. The soul has not yet acquired the inclination of delay, of saying, "To-morrow," "To-morrow," that to-morrow that never comes.

In this congregation there are grey-haired Christians who began the service of God so early in life that they can hardly remember when they made their decisive choice; and if you were to ask them about it, they would tell you that they had scarcely any struggle at all when they made their resolve to follow the Master. And they are always thankful to the dear parents and friends who counseled them, and helped them to make this early choice.

You students in this college, who have made the better choice and are standing faithful in your Christian profession, should daily thank the Father for His mercy in bringing you into the goodly fellowship of His people.

And if there be one student here who has not as yet taken this stand and placed himself decisively with the people of God, may I urge upon him the duty which he owes himself to turn his mind toward the great concerns of the faith, to search for the truth till the glory of the divine mercy bursts upon him, to remember his Creator in the days of his youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when he may say, "I have no pleasure in them."

# FAITH THE GUARDIAN OF YOUTH



#### IV.

### FAITH THE GUARDIAN OF YOUTH

ST. LUKE 15: 18—"I will arise and go to my father."

**I**N this beautiful parable of the prodigal we find once more an apt illustration of the well-known truth that in all human development, however we may surround the young with aids to mental or moral culture, their greatest advances occur less frequently by quiet progression than by sudden leap and surprise. Call life, if you will, a journey. It is that. But how seldom is it an even journey, a pushing on over the level and beaten highway. More often we find it a mountain scramble, with broad levels here and there, but with many sharp pitches and many a rapid climb.

Note this in the child's physical development. You think of him as growing up gradually, but when you recall the facts you will remember with that child a period when month followed month with nature suspending her efforts. In bewilderment you asked yourself why in the world that child did not grow. But just as you were giving it serious attention, all at once nature rallied her energies, and the boy shot up and gained more inches in a half year than he had made in two or three years before. In moral and spiritual development we experience similar

arrests and advances, and sometimes to a more noticeable degree. Concede all that may be claimed for the benefit to be derived from good influences and associations. They are essential, but when we are saying that we are by no means admitting that their effects will be uniform. There are periods when their momentum seems to be stored away and to be to all appearance latent. Day succeeds day and that young soul displays the same narrow outlooks, enjoys the same round of pleasures on the same low plane, indulges the same restricted views and ignoble hopes; and then, in a moment when least expected, that child's nature expands. What was the occasion? Possibly a bit of travel, or a new friend, or a stimulating book, or an inspiring thought. The boy awakens. To our wonder he has more in him than we would have believed; a ripper judgment, a keener insight, a larger sense of fitness and responsibility.

We meet with similar movements in our own lives. With all of our attainments, what we know least of all is ourselves. We know better the secrets of the earth ten miles down, than the secrets of our own hearts. Who of us is able to forecast his feelings with certainty a month ahead, or even for a day? Is it not the fact with nearly all of us, that in our fickleness of disposition we are turning this way and that, following the chance currents that blow here and there, like the vanes on the steeples? Some interest appeals to us in which we have never admitted that we had interest and to which we have acknowledged no claim whatever. To-day we resent its approach as an intrusion and an impertinence, and yet to-mor-



row our whole attitude toward it has undergone revolution, so that what we once ignored we are eager to conciliate; so that the very people whom we were holding at arm's length now seem essential to our happiness.

Such change as this we remark in the story of the prodigal. Here is a young man who was infatuated to see the world, who must see it, and who after his wanderings has discovered its folly and emptiness, and now yearns with all his soul for a glimpse of the old home. Doubtless a short time back, while he was carousing with his giddy companions, he would have derided the thought that such an emotion could ever stir his heart. He then was priding himself on his determination, on his stoical self-control. But he did not know himself. Down deep in his soul there were springs of love which he could not see, and whose extent was unfathomed. "*When he came to himself!*" How significant the phrase, the tides of love burst forth in a generous flood, on whose strong current he was borne back to restoration of manhood, and to his old place in his father's bosom.

This alteration of character, this opening out of life into larger fulness, comes often, as in the parable, with the soul's consciousness of deprivation and loss. It was "*when he began to be in want*" that the prodigal came to realize the comfort of home, its plenty, its protection, its cherishing love. What is this want? In the parable it was poverty. The wanderer had come to the end of his resources. When he left home with his portion of the family property in his possession he had imagined that he had ample supply for his every need.

He had indulged all his passions and caprices. He had flung away his patrimony with spendthrift hand till all was gone and he was in extremity. His gay companions, who were so friendly while they were roystering at his expense, deserted him at once when his cash was gone, and now he suffers from loneliness and also from actual hunger. It was torturing want, chilling and desperate, which drove this wanderer to think of his father's table which he had forsaken, and of his father's love which he had despised. But we are not to fall into the crass error of imagining that one must be in absolute destitution to be in want. Poverty has its gradations, and it can pinch the soul long before one descends into uttermost penury. Define wealth not as plenty in the absolute, but plenty as measured by the scale of expenditure that is common in the social life in which one is moving. Sir Walter Scott was master of Abbotsford, and was attended by his servants, and was regarded by his neighbors as a most prosperous man, and yet he was struggling nobly to beat away reverses with his pen; coining his brains into gold to satisfy his creditors, and so we see that he was in the stress of poverty. Our own Sidney Lanier, that gifted author and poet, was doubtless hurried to his grave by the overtoil which was necessary to win his bread. He labored long hours and died early, a sacrifice to want. Very probably some about him were envying him his comforts which they could see, but not seeing the struggles and worriments which were wearing his life away.

But there is another want which may press sharply, even while kindly luxury seems to be filling the sufferer's cup of bounty to the brim. We have read ancient tales of gold and precious gems turning to leaves, or to dust, in the finder's hands, and we sometimes think that in these prosaic times gold will remain as gold, and that diamonds will hold their value whatever may happen. And yet it is the fact that one may have money and possessions in abundance, and with it all not be able to purchase satisfaction in his heart. Ah! What an evil sting is this, to lose out of existence all that gives it zest; to have power, riches, pleasure, and yet while possessing all to suffer the sense of utter vanity and emptiness; to lift to the lip sweet drafts of art, and travel, and friendships, and find that all are tasteless on the tongue. Want! That may mean a healthful appetite, and little or nothing on the table; or it may mean a groaning table, burdened with every delicacy to tempt the palate, and yet no appetite to match the abundance. You remember that touching lament of Lord Byron. He was a peer of Great Britain, enjoying an ample income, a favorite in the great capitals of Europe, courted and worshiped as the poet of his age, a devotee of pleasure, and yet wholly out of tune with life. As he lifts the veil we feel that he is laying bare his inmost soul in these plaintive lines:

I loved, but those I loved are gone:  
 Had friends: my early friends are fled!  
 How cheerless feels the heart alone  
 When all its former hopes are dead.

Though gay companions o'er the bowl  
Dispel awhile the sense of ill;  
Though pleasure stirs the maddening soul,  
The heart, the heart is lonely still.

The heart pines for love. Such is its hunger for love that it sometimes is willing to cheat itself with the counterfeit. It is thus that you can explain the seductiveness of flattery. People will fish for compliments, and they get one, even though it is obviously unmerited, they will delude themselves with the notion that they are well thought of. The day looks brighter to them because of that false compliment, while a deserved rebuke which would help them to better living would make a June sky as forbidding as that of winter. We must have love. It is a necessity of the soul. What cheer to us in any time of struggle to know that father, mother, friend, holds us in sweet recollection! We can brave the impossible, and bear the unendurable, when we can turn to the comforting refuge of home, where pure hearts sustain us with unstinted affection. "*Better,*" so says Solomon, "*is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith.*" But if that be true of earthly loves, how much more true is it when we think of the love of God. Where other loves encourage, God's love fully satisfies. Sometimes I ask myself if it was a trial for Jesus to tread the path of perfect, sinless holiness; and then with the light of my Bible on this question I find that it was no trial to Him. God's favor was His nourishment, as He said, "*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.*" As the sun is to the earth, light-giving, cherishing; so is God's

favor to us. No poverty in the world is like that which is felt when God withdraws the light of His countenance. Rather than that, let a man have the darkness of Egypt, or the chill polar blast, that cuts like a knife, and chokes the current of the blood with stinging icicles! Better for Samson to be at the mercy of the Philistines; better for him when they fetter him in the prison, and gouge out his eyes, than for God to depart from him. Judas hanged himself in his agony of despair. But why should Judas despair? He had the thirty pieces of silver, the amount of his contract with the priests of the Temple. As men say, he had carried his plans to a successful conclusion. But his soul was sitting in thick darkness. He was conscious that he had abandoned God, that he had cast off the love of God, and when he failed to get the High Priest to take back that money and release Jesus, he flung down the silver on the Temple floor and rushed away to an unhallowed death. Sad indeed is this turning away from God, this neglect of His word and commandment, this drifting out into the frigid atmosphere of worldly thought! What jeopardy of happiness! What wilful exposure of our highest interests for time and eternity!

But the parable which expresses the want which befell the wanderer was aggravated by the accompaniment of bitter humiliation. What a fall to pride! What an expiation does he suffer for his self-sufficiency! In the picture as drawn by Jesus he sits with the swine; he tends the swine, the most despicable occupation which a Jew could imagine: and as if to compel him to wallow in the

deepest mire of degradation, he is represented as sharing the food of the swine. A swineherd! What situation could be more desperate? The Jew regarded this animal as an abomination. He dreaded the sight of it, and if he came into contact with a swine he incurred ceremonial defilement, which must be removed by tedious and expensive sacrifices. The Jew would not so much as name the beast by his name, but mentioned him when he had to by a circumlocution, as "*Dabar acheer*," "That other thing." To have anything to do with "That other thing" was to be a social outcast, an alien, a worse than a publican. And yet to just that level the prodigal's waywardness had brought him. He had scorned his father, and he is become a slave. He turned his back on his father's house; he is day and night in the unsheltered field. He forsook the friends and companions of his own station, and he is reduced to associate with the vilest of the vile. He spurned the bounty of his father's table, and in consequence he drops to eating carobs with the swine!

And what is this but the inevitable outcome which awaits all wandering from God? Prodigality, be it in gold, or in time, or in misuse of spiritual power, is the forerunner of want. I often wonder what the angels up yonder think of our occupations. They must regard them as profitable or unprofitable, according to their ruling purpose. If they are directed by the fear of God, the angels will commend them. But if God be forgotten, and the heart be set on pecuniary gain, or on indulgence, or on mere social triumph as the

principal thing, how can the angels do less than drop the tear of pity?

But why this speech of angels? Simply for this, that the present order is merely for a passing day. This arrangement which allows the law of God to be broken, and His moral government to be defied, is evidently temporary and cannot endure. All the science of the day is pointing to a single source of power; to a single ruling Mind. In this universe there can be but one scepter of dominion, but one center of supreme authority, but one line of ultimate destiny. With this the angels are in complete accord, and their judgment as to our purposes and pursuits will be the decision of eternity. Whatever enterprises or concerns they do not commend must terminate in the long run in disgrace and destruction. Of this we have hint in the Bible. Some are there represented who cannot bear the sight of the Redeemer's glory. The memory of their earthly career affords them no comfort, since on the one side it shows utter want of service in His cause, or on the other, a startling record of audacious transgression. To think of a past like that is condemnation enough, and they implore that the rocks and mountains may fall upon them and hide their sin.

To the wanderer in his lowly and despairing state comes one thought of cheer, that of father and of father's house. The parental counsel has been neglected, the parental shelter has been left behind; but that invisible tie of parental affection, softer than silken cord, stronger than cable of twisted steel, remains unbroken. For there is this divine power in fatherhood and motherhood, that

it never ceases its yearning watch-care for the child it has led by the hand, or folded to its bosom. The love of a father reaches out past all separation, past all misfortune, past all sin, with the certainty of the stars. And it is right here that we touch the glory of the Gospel in Christ's revelation of the Fatherhood of God. That love has been eternal, for God declares through His prophet Jeremiah, "*Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*"

God's love has been provident. So mothers cut out and stitch together little garments, singing at their labor, and sewing love into every seam. Surely not less was that love which planned this earth for man's residence and supplied it with gifts to meet his every want. I survey these wants and they seem endless, but the provision for their satisfaction more than keeps pace with the need. Before Adam set up housekeeping in Eden the earth home was all swept and garnished. The whole establishment was furnished indoors and out; in earth, and sea, and air. In all the years of man's possession, whether many or few, this store of treasure has not been exhausted; for always as human wants increase new stores of bounty are developed and new proofs of the provident mercy of our Heavenly Father are displayed. The whole earth is filled with His glory. And the same providential love is shown in God's care for His people. With what merciful kindness He led Israel out of bondage! There were perils of wars, perils of famine, perils of the sea, and perils of the wilderness, but He directed their way till they were safely settled in their new home in the Land



of Promise. Of a truth God was the Father of His people. Nor are we to imagine with some that this special leading of Israel was a mark of particular favor to the Jew. God was enlightening the Jew in order that He might use this race for the enlightenment of the rest of the world. So we have the word of prophecy in Isaiah, "*I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand and keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light to the Gentiles.*" And there is a like statement in another place, where the Lord declares, "*I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*"

And so we perceive that the Father's love goes out to all His children. He cares for the cultured Christian in his comfortable pew, and for the hard-worked coolie on the far side of the earth, whose back is almost broken under his crushing burdens, and for the ignorant African, who cringes before his idol of clay in the depths of his native forest. Whether Christians of our day recognize the fact or not, the God of the New Testament is a God of love, and his manifestations of Himself have always been manifestations of love. So the Gospel represents Him. This parable of the prodigal has its motive in declaring the changeless Fatherhood of God, the essential attribute of which is love. And the life of Christ is love, the tenderest and most self-sacrificing love all the way from before the foundation of the world, down to the incarnation, the manger, the cross, and the publishing of the Gospel. And this wonderful love of God follows every one of us, and

encompasses in its embrace every one of us. We may not have heard the voice with Abraham, nor seen the fiery bush with Moses, nor crossed the Jordan dry shod with Joshua; but all our lives have been in His hand. Have we directed our own course during all these years of our lives? We cannot pretend it. Often there have been periods of deep darkness. Events have occurred which we have not foreseen and against which we could not guard. Sorrows have overswept us, and our best laid plans have been thwarted. Often in our perplexity there was nothing to be done but to stand still and wait. And yet the outcome has been good. Time and again we have rejoiced that our plans were overturned, and that God's better way prevailed. We confess when we think about it that the Hand that has guided the bark of our destiny has been that of infinite tenderness, mercy, and love.

While considering his want, his humiliation, and the hopelessness of his present case, the prodigal turns toward the home he deserted and quickly reaches determination. "*I will arise,*" so he says, "*and go to my father.*"

In this firm utterance, "I will arise," his new life begins. With that word the single barrier that has shut out his father's help is broken down. What keeps God out of many a soul is never distance, never isolation, never want; it is always the obduracy of the will. That is what Paul teaches when he declares that nothing in time or eternity, nothing in life or in death, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. All that is without ourselves is powerless to part

God from us, provided only that our own soul rests in Him.

Every human tie may perish,  
 Friend to friend unfaithful prove;  
 Mothers cease their own to cherish,  
 Heaven and earth at last remove,  
 But no changes  
 Can avert the Father's love.

If at the last any one of us remains away from God, the guilt of it will lie, not against the Father, but against that stubborn will of our own which we would not subdue. In an old Irish folk-tale some fugitives who were evading pursuit flung on the ground a grain of corn, and it became a wide river behind them; and when the chase was becoming hot again they flung another, and it became a lofty mountain range between them and their enemies. And this will of man, invisible, intangible, impalpable, can resolve itself into a barrier, wider than the Amazon, deeper than the Atlantic, loftier than the stars. What are all these pretexts and excuses so often given by people who are arguing themselves into living aloof from God? Search them all through and they are found to be nothing but obduracy of WILL. The Will is averse. It is intractable, unsubmissive, impenitent. It was a blessed change when the wanderer said to himself, "I will arise." With that resolve all difficulties vanished. His heart is lighter at once. He does not stand on the order of his going. He is ready to accept any sacrifice, and to live if necessary as one of his father's hired servants. And so, my friend, if you are now seeking God, make no delay.

## 74 FAITH FOR THE COLLEGE MAN

Come to your resolve quickly. Say, "I will arise and go to my father."

I'll go to Jesus, though my sin  
Hath like a mountain rose;  
I'll know His courts, I'll enter in,  
Whatever may oppose.

How may the wanderer now come to the Father? Now, exactly as in the olden time, by submission and reconciliation. First there is the resolve; then the cry of penitence, "*Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight.*" First, the casting of self on the Father's mercy: then the kiss of love. First, the restoration to sonship: then the privileges of sonship; the ring, the robe, the festival.

Coming to the Father then is first and foremost coming to righteousness. In this life we are in the thick of the conflict, and in the rush and sweep of it we must strike for the good or for the evil. Unless we are held by some strong tie of principle, how easy it will be for those who are young to strike for the wrong! How easy the leaning toward the doubtful and the questionable! How difficult to choose the straight-forward path! We know that every inclination toward the lesser good, though it be the slightest, every excuse uttered or imagined for a moral lapse, weakens the moral nature. Whenever the soul revolts from wrong, when it struggles to attain the good and the true, when it pursues the high and noble ideal, even though it may sometimes be groping blindly, yet in the effort it is approaching God.

Another step in coming to the Father is the

acknowledgment of constituted authority. We all realize then there is a divine Lawgiver and a divine law. This divine law is the expression of God's purpose. In His kingdom the Almighty is autocratic. This is not charging that He is harsh, or tyrannical; it is only saying that He governs, and that because His right is the right, His law must be supreme. And it is a law that will be maintained. Were it a fast and loose law, a law that could be operated by fits and starts, the lawbreakers themselves would despise it. The devils whom it uncaged would point the finger of scorn at a law which was incompetent to circumscribe their ravage and rebellion. But they have no such occasion. When the Son of Man walks the earth in all His sublimity of meekness and gentleness, the devils laugh not, they tremble. The good take the attitude of submission to the divine law. I am much interested in a definition of faith which is so unusual as to be worth noting. We have often imagined faith to be merely confidence, trust, belief. It is all that and a great deal more, for a true faith includes the spirit of obedience. So Prof. Godet has said wisely, "Faith is not a thought or a desire; it is an act which brings two living beings into personal contact." Such is the faith which is so beautifully eulogized in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the faith of the fathers. That was faith in action. It was faith working. It was belief impelling obedience. Whoever comes to that point, that he submits to the divine law, not merely because he thinks that it will bring him pleasure, but because it is the divine law, the expression of the will of God, is surely coming to

the Father. And this is why the real Christian needs so little urging to incline him to the ordinances of the church. He sees them, the ordinance of baptism, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, as expressions of the will of the Master for His disciples of every age. He is submitting to that will in all things; and so with no urging he exclaims with the man who was converted in the desert, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

But coming to the Father is also coming into sympathy with God. The apostle is reaching after this thought when he declares that we are laborers together with God. Count it all the difference in the world between laboring for, and laboring with. In some business house one man works for the salary, and he does just as little as he can and keep himself on the pay-roll. If he can neglect some duty without reproof, he feels that he has managed well. It is for such eye-servants that employers are compelled to set up machines to tell when the employees come to work, and when they leave.

But true men do not give occasion for such contrivances. They are anxious for the success of the business: they look after affairs as if the business were their own: they labor with rather than for. In a clumsy way this may illustrate the relation of the Christian with God. He comes to God to give what help he can in this great enterprise of the world's redemption. In this relationship it is possible to be attached nominally to the forces of the kingdom, while one's sympathies are mainly with the world. God is not pleased to have it after that fashion. He calls for His servant's life, but

He calls no less earnestly for that servant's heart. I do not imagine for an instant that I comprehend all the necessities of action, speech, and influence which are set in motion to bring one soul out of darkness into the light. But this I do know, that all which God has ordained and arranged in this direction is useful; and I am intending by His help to place myself in the fullest sympathy with it; always if I am able to understand its whole drift and tendency; always just as much whether I understand it or not, provided it is God's arrangement. There is very much in this thought of sympathy with God. Men are not to be judged in the hereafter altogether by what they say or do. They must be estimated in connection with all their surroundings, and by the main purpose in their hearts. Should we neglect this principle we might easily fall into the error of declaring one man near God, when in fact he is far away; or of declaring of another that he is far away, when in the sight of God the situation is just the reverse. The one may seem to be near the temple, but he has his back to it, and with every step he is leaving it farther behind him. Another may be judged at a greater distance, but his face is set heavenward, and every step is taking him nearer home.

The question of our relationship to the Father comes near to us all. I have but the one voice for the member of the church, and for the non-member. We are all in the one case. We are all exposed to the world sorrow and the world evil, and are all in need of the Father's protection and love. We can be sure that the soul has no peace, no satisfaction, no comfort so long as it is apart

from God. Out there with the prodigal are want, humiliation, grief, and homeless destitution. We all desire the Father's kiss and his warm embrace. If there has been the least departure from His love, may this day be marked by our return.

For every one who comes back there is a promise. The love of God is a boundless sea which can wash every penitent clean. Say then to-day, this very moment, "I will arise and go to my Father."



**FAITH DIVINELY SIMPLE**



## V.

### FAITH DIVINELY SIMPLE

GALATIANS 1: 11, 12—"But I certify you brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

**I**T is clear to the most casual reader of the Galatian epistle that it is a polemical document, a plea for the true Gospel against the inroads of all false and man-made gospels, an assertion of Paul's apostolic authority in the face of opposers and traducers, an appeal to the Galatian churches that they hold fast to the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and to avoid falling again under the "yoke of bondage" from which they had happily escaped.

Now, in all this extended argument which runs throughout the epistle several things are apparent.

First, there is indication that the apostolic church had some very troublesome problems to solve, and beside all its struggle with heathendom that it was compelled to battle with the twin foes of indifference and disaffection within its own body. I am suspecting that we are far from realizing this phase of church history. We have often sympathized with the distresses of those early saints. Our hearts have ached for them as we

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Elon College, N. C., February 22, 1914. Defiance College, Ohio, February 21, 1915.

have read of their being cast into prison, or stoned by raging mobs, or exposed in the arena to the fangs of savage beasts; and we have frequently consoled ourselves with the thought of the solace they must have experienced in the bosom of the church, sustained by the support and sympathy of their loving brethren.

But when we look into it we fail to see that they enjoyed all that peace and heavenly sunshine in the bosom of the church, that we have so fondly imagined. As we follow the record, and as we interpret some significant passages in the epistles, we discover that the membership of the early church was human, very human indeed. Strange, is it not, how the trail of the serpent of earthly passions will defile the holiest places? Into that camp of Israel in the wilderness came the murmurs of discontent and rebellion. The pure presence of the holy Jesus, ineffably holy, did not hush the wranglings of envious disciples, who disputed with each other over the chief seats of a kingdom that was still to come.

And so in the early church there arose the harsh clamor of partisanship. Some declared themselves for Paul, and some for Apollos, and some for Cephas. And others were ready to profane the sacred name of the Master by making it the slogan of a faction. No, that early church had its struggles and contentions both from without and from within. You cannot picture it as enjoying the calm tranquillity of a summer lakelet, blooming with lilies under a cloudless sky. If at any period of that age we discover any record of sterling virtues, or any beautiful spirit of devout con-

secration, it is because the noblest souls among them emulated the love and patience of their Master, and because having been schooled in the gentleness of Jesus they had learned to bear and to forbear.

From all this we are able to draw the natural inference, since it was not all quietude and perfect calm in the apostolic church, that it is idle to expect a more restful experience under the present dispensation. The battle changes front, but the conflict continues from age to age. The church militant is one thing and the church triumphant is quite another; and so long as the church is on the earth it has no greater danger to dread than the incoming of the insidious error, that while it is militant it can assume the tranquil state of the church triumphant in glory.

Possibly it is not generally understood why Jesus was hated so intensely by the people of Judea, and hated at every point of contact. Was it because He was such a firebrand? Was it because He was such a kindler of strife? Not so. He was peace itself, the Prince of Peace. But the spotlessness of His perfect purity showed the sharpest possible contrast between Himself and the prevalent disorders and vices. Because He was so holy and because His time was so persistently unholy, the conflict between them became irrepressible. And so it must ever be. The Gospel, insofar as it represents a way of life, establishes a standard which is vastly higher than the current customs and usages. True enough that nineteen Christian centuries have wrought great progress in manners and morals. The world is

better to-day, it has more good men in it, and it is on a higher plane than ever before; higher than in the apostolic age, and higher than in any previous age to which we may refer. But with all this advancement there can be no lessening of the struggle. Love of purity must increase with the degree of purity which we have attained. The joy of conquest stimulates to further conquests. The more Christlike any one of us may become, the more we shall yearn for the full attainment, and the more we shall press forward to present the whole wide world spotless and blameless before our Redeemer.

The next thing to be noticed in the text is, that much of the conflict in the early church, which distracted the disciples and weakened their influence, originated from the intrusion of doctrines that were foreign to the spirit of the Gospel; from the declaration by some of what may be termed man-made gospels.

This was the disturbing feature in the Galatian churches. It was the same with the congregations that had been planted in Corinth. In Antioch the contention that arose originated from the narrowness of Peter, who after he had been ministering to the whole church, to the Gentiles among them, as well as to those of strictly Hebrew descent, afterward withdrew himself from the Gentile converts and confined his labors to the Jewish faction alone. All down the ages we discover the like; everywhere bigotry and narrowness, and these often intensified by the weight of the years.

Some of the old deceits and subtleties which made trouble for the apostles still survive and

even now are exploited diligently. What are palmed off upon us now and then as "new faith" and "new thought" are frequently merely some of the ancient heresies, which have been furbished up to suit the whims of the unwary. Because of the ready market for such commodities, there are always religious teachers who stand ready to offer some tenet of the sort that Paul once characterized as "*philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*"

And because we do not have the apostles with us to give us warning of this kind of danger, it is all the more incumbent on us to guard against these gospels of human invention, and to distinguish them from the true Gospel, which was given us by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Approaching then the gospels which are the inventions of men, the systems devised by priest-craft, which along with their few grains of truth present us with bushels of falsification, I may remark that with every one of them, even with the worst among them, we must expect to find some provision that will meet some human want. The Chinese coolie who burns gilt papers before his joss, or the African bushman who cowers in the dust before his clay fetich, in the act is satisfying some longing of his nature. His soul is reaching out after God, after all the God he knows. In the stress of life he desires protection, and he esteems that joss, that fetich of clay, to be a visible token of the invisible power which he supplicates. Be it granted that the system in which he puts his trust is false and impudent; nevertheless the impulse

that actuates him is real, and the want of his nature that produces it is real also.

It is important for us to understand the force of this principle, and that we realize that all the false systems that plague poor humanity get their footing in the positiveness of some human want. They are counterfeits, but the counterfeit always owes the ease of its circulation to the fact that the reality of which it is an imitation is in active demand. A false coin passes because it has the stamp and the ring of truth, and what is still more to the point, because people desire what the reality represents. In trade there is no prospect of disposing of any commodity before the demand for it has been created. Lace curtains I imagine would not sell well among the Esquimaux. And so a religious system in order to attract attention must touch people favorably at some point, else they would give it no countenance. The fact that so many religious systems endure, and that so many of them have such wide acceptance indicates that they respond to some human necessity.

But when we have made that concession, it does not follow that their existence is warranted, nor does it go to prove that a false system should be encouraged by intelligent minds. Explorers in the arctic seas, when their food supply has failed, have been known to chew leather straps and bits of rawhide. But that is not to say that leather straps and rawhide are desirable articles of diet. It merely goes to show that the men were frightfully hungry.

So there was a spiritual yearning in Israel when Moses had been for weeks in the mountain and



had made no sign of return. Aaron appeased that yearning by making a golden calf for the people, which they worshiped, but who shall say that their yearning warranted that act of idolatry? And so we must dismiss the notion, if ever we entertained it, that because some religious system in some manner touches the hearts of its adherents it must have the approval of God. In fact, that touching the hearts of its adherents at some point may be the explanation of why it is keeping its adherents from the true religion, which would touch their hearts at every point.

Again, it may be said that among all the false and man-made systems of religion, there is none but what will somewhere and somehow teach some element of truth. The worst among them all will present some tenet or doctrine which the enlightened conscience of Christendom must applaud.

For this there are several reasons.

One is, the general prevalence of truth. Truth is the general expression of realities, and there is divine power behind every fact. The stars in their courses do battle for the truth. Never was there a liar who was so skilful at the business as to be able to tell lies all the time. He might be a veritable Ananias, or a Munchausen, among liars; but for all that, some truth of necessity would have to creep in among his clever inventions, from sheer weariness of protracted exercise of the inventive faculty, and because it would be restful once in a while to fall back upon an undisputed fact.

But there is a better reason for the prevalence of truth. For God in His original revelations to Adam, and to Noah, and to the patriarchs, im-

pressed certain fundamental truths upon the consciousness of the race so profoundly that all the changes of changing time have not sufficed to obliterate them from the tablets of memory. There are narrations which you will find on the clay tablets exhumed from the ruins of Nineveh, and that are embalmed in the Vedic poems of the Brahmans of India, and in the traditions current among the aborigines of the Polynesian archipelago, which are astonishingly like some things in the book of Genesis, and which seem to indicate a common origin.

But there is another consideration; namely, that a system of human invention, which its author was consciously planning to foist upon the credulity of mankind, would probably include some truths commonly accepted as such, for the purpose of giving weight to his general fabrication. A system of lies that is all lies seldom deceives anybody. The false witness who invents a complete situation will break down under skilful examination, while the other who perjures himself moderately, just sufficiently to substantiate his contention, who weaves strands of truth into his web of fiction, has the better chance of befogging the judge and the jury.

For such reasons therefore it may be expected that man-made religions will hardly be fictitious altogether, but rather that they will offer some evident truth along with their main body of deception and delusion.

As a convenient example of man-made faiths; of religious systems that bear the marks of human origin so plainly that all the world who wills may

read, we may note two of the most conspicuous, the two that have so many traits in common; Mohammedanism and Mormonism.

We will glance for a moment at Mormonism. Where can a so-called religion be found, which more clearly deserves the indictment of a man-made system, than this pestiferous abomination, which lifts its serpent head in the valleys of Utah and her surrounding territory? You can trace the history of this unclean spawn, cast up by the passion and unholy ambition of man. You can visit its great temple in Salt Lake City, and its endowment house, which is more the shrine of its ceremonies than the temple itself. You can go from there back to Nauvoo in Illinois; thence to Kirtland, Ohio, and thence to Manchester, New York, where the first Mormon meeting was held and the first organization was effected. You can point out the men who invented and developed it; Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Joseph Taylor. You can follow Joseph Smith to "the west side of a hill, not far from the top, about four miles from Palmyra, in the county of Ontario, and near the main road," where he pretended to find the golden plates, "too dazzling for the world to see;" the mythical basis of the Book of Mormon. You can sit with Joseph Smith in that town of Manchester, New York, while he hides behind a blanket, stretched across the room, to conceal the sacred plates from eyes profane, while he dictates to Oliver Cowdrey the words he is to write, and which constitute the Book of Mormon.

But even Mormonism, whose beginnings you can trace in this fashion; Mormonism, which is more

degrading to womanhood than the zenanas of India, or than the harems of Constantinople; which cultivates ignorance and stupidity; whose revelations and metaphysics are a fanciful agglomeration of unmitigated nonsense, will yet send forth some stray beams of light along with its consummate darkness. For Mormonism teaches that there is a God in Heaven: a sublime truth that.

It teaches salvation by faith, the duty of prayer and the hope of the resurrection: glorious truths every one of them.

But is Mormonism to be accepted or condoned because some truth gleams out from the multiplicity of its errors? Never! You may find a diamond in an ashpit, but the one stray gem will not transmute the pile of cinders and clinkers into jewels of price.

Those Judaizing teachers who followed in the track of Paul, and tried by every wicked slander and subterfuge to break down his authority in the churches, must in their preaching have uttered some sound gospel truths, but that did not hinder the apostle from denouncing them as foes of the truth, and their teaching as Anathema Maranatha.

The decisive test by which we are to distinguish a man-made faith begins with its manifest errors and inconsistencies. Religion is looking toward a land unknown. As to the future, and even as to the eternal world of the present, we are gazing into the mist and shadow. Every thoughtful soul is eager to know more of the inscrutable problems which face us on every side, and which so baffle understanding. Even in this present world the

learning of the hour has barely scratched the surface of things. As the great Newton declared, we have gathered a few pebbles along the shore of the ocean of knowledge. And if we know so little of the visible universe, so little of what life is, and of how it is, what should we expect to know of the country that lies beyond the horizon of experience? For extending our knowledge it is necessary for revelation in compassion for our perplexity to come to our relief and lift the veil. Clever speculation and fanciful conjecture in labored partnership may erect systems spun from metaphysical cobwebs, but their inherent weakness is their best refutation. How many ambitious philosophies; how many brave theories of God, of human duty and of our ultimate destiny have flourished for a day, only to vanish forever! Doubtless some of their originators have sought sincerely to mitigate abuses and elevate the social order. But the blight of human infirmity was upon all their handiwork. It is the Divine Mind only which can adapt means to ends in full perfection. It requires the Divine Vision to compass the round of natural and spiritual obligation, and mete to each its own in due order and proportion. Consequently it happens that all systems of philosophy or religion which originate with man are miserably complicated; while the one that originated with the Divine Mind is divinely simple. The human system is burdensome, while the divine system is inspirational. The human doctrine shackles the soul, but the divine doctrine is a ceaseless joy. You remember how the rabbis before the coming of Jesus befogged men by their

profoundly labored explanations of sacred themes, which after all failed to explain anything. But when Jesus spoke of the same matters, the darkness became light, and crooked things were made straight, and all who heard were amazed that they had not seen it so for themselves. And so to-day, whenever a false gospel stands before the people and tries to take the place of the true Gospel, the true Gospel will be simple, and the false gospel will be complicated: the true Gospel will show consistency with itself and with the nature of things, while the false gospel will display a congeries of inconsistencies and absurdities: the true Gospel will commend itself to rich and poor, to the learned and the unlearned; in other words to all humanity, while the false gospel will make its appeal to cliques and castes, and to the prejudices of class distinctions.

Another clear mark of a man-made system is its solicitude for its own welfare. It is intoxicated with the wine of its own vanity, and is auto-poisoned with the virus of self-interest. It is an ominous sign when any religious system exhibits as its main anxiety the heaping up of riches, or the exaltation of the citadel of its own greatness. I like not those heathen oracles of old to which came the faithful with questions of the future, and where the suppliant with the most precious gift in hand secured the kindest response. I like not the fanaticism of the priest, nor his greed for gold. I like not, as Dryden has it,

The ambiguous god, who rules the laboring breast;  
And in mysterious words his mind expressed:  
Some truths revealed, in terms involved the rest.

And so I like not those gatherings at night, where people sit in darkness, drawn together by hope of communicating with the spirits of the departed. I make no point now of the frequent exposures which occurred, when a too convenient gas jet has made wreck of the exhibition, and of the reputation of the medium together. All that may take care of itself. The chief concern just now is that the miracles of a true religion are without money and without price. When Jesus turned the water into wine at Cana, and when He spoke the word which brought the brother of Mary and Martha from the dead, nobody was permitted to collect an admission fee. When the medium of to-day proposes to materialize the spirits who are gone and fixes a tariff for the show, that five dollars a head, that one dollar a head, stamps the affair as a commercial enterprise, a venture of the earth earthy. Divinity has no part or lot in commercialism.

But the weakness of systems that are false does not pause with the feature of finance. Power is sometimes more than money, since it confers power, and power will produce money. It is a sinister token when any religious organization, known as such, whether in Utah or anywhere else, thrusts itself forward into the arena of public life and attempts to manipulate the currents of political favor. What shall be said of a church, small or great, which obtrudes itself into the turbid tide of party elections? What shall be said of its throwing itself as a united mass to accomplish the election of representatives and senators in state or nation? When any religious body assumes an

attitude like that, it gives warrant for the conviction that it cares less for the public welfare than for its own sectarian advantage. I like not this passion for self-aggrandizement on the part of any religious body. From the experience of the ages we are impelled to believe, when we find any church seeking to advance its own prospects by unhallowed means, when it summons to its aid such familiars as force, or persecution, or treachery, or imposture; when it makes appeal to the passions of the multitude; when it drops the standard of principle, or shifts its principles for the sake of expediency, that in such circumstances it writes its own condemnation. The church which Christ established was never an end for itself: it was the Lord's hand for lifting aloft among the nations the light of His life, the glory of His word. The church to live for itself! The church to take chief thought for itself! But Jesus never lived for Himself, but always for others. When His life was threatened, as the Scripture says, "*He saved not Himself.*" Ever and always it was the right, the truth, before any consideration of Himself. And so to-day, any system which makes pretension of representing the gospel, and which deviates by so much as a hair's breadth from the unselfishness of Christ; which for the sake of securing an advantage for itself falsifies a fact, or violates the sacredness of principle, by so much betrays itself as a man-made institution, and opposed to the true Gospel by the extent that it has taken any of these misguided steps.

Ever and always in the widest possible contrast to all man-made faiths, or man-perverted faiths,



appears the true Gospel, which came to Paul, and has come to all true believers by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We find this contrast first in the simplicity of the Gospel teaching about Jesus. Now it is a most wonderful thought, one of the most amazing that ever entered the human mind, that the Divine could condescend to become human, that the eternal Son of God could become the Son of man, that the Lord of glory, who created all things, could suffer in Gethsemane and on Calvary that He might win sinners back to the bosom of the Father. Whenever I think of that my soul is lost in wonder, love, and praise. To search out all the reasons, and define all the relationships of that sacrifice of the cross will consume ages of the life to come, and will require the instruction of the ablest angels who are the professors in the theological seminary of the skies. But because this fact of the atonement of Jesus has such vital connection with the Christian system, and because the roots of it strike so deep into the moral government of God, it has been taught sometimes in terms which mystify the intellect and perplex the disciple.

Perhaps it would be well for us to observe that there are two kinds of theology; the kind that is metaphysical, and the other that is practical. Metaphysical theology searches into the deep things of God, but in the maze of its theoretical speculations it will require very careful handling, such as it may receive from trained professors of theology, and from Christians of wide experience, whose faithful service under the Master equips

them with a store of spiritual facts, by help of which they may hold in restraint the vagaries of errant fancy. But for inexperience such speculations are too subtle and profound. And so the Gospel approaches men and offers them results and not theories; a practical theology, and not a treatise on metaphysics. It offers them a divine Savior, without bothering to theorize just how He is divine, and it pledges the pardon of sins on acceptance of Christ as Master and Lord. In all the New Testament there is not a word to imply that the believer must understand how Christ saves him: he is simply to believe and to serve. The gospels relate the story of the Savior's birth, His life, His death, His resurrection. Nothing that the human mind can imagine could be more artless, more unstudied, more winsome than the narratives about Jesus which the apostles told, beginning at Jerusalem, and carrying that message all through the Gentile cities. That story of Jesus did not deal in mysteries. It presented the clearest facts and asked that they be accepted and made the basis of corresponding action. In every sermon that the New Testament reports the teaching about Jesus is of this simple and practical kind. And what such instruction accomplished can be seen in the amazing growth of the primitive church. The scholar and the peasant; the poor in their poverty, and the rich with their comforts, were all able to comprehend that. They heard, they believed, they committed their all to Jesus.

The true Gospel is simple in its doctrine respecting the ministry. But the views of men respecting

the servant who ministers at the altar are not simple at all, and frequently they are self-contradictory.

In the sight of some the minister is molded of superior clay, so that he is inexpressibly finer, incomparably holier. If common men are earthen vessels, he is fine porcelain and hand-painted by the cherubim.

With others the minister is a sacramental person, a priest, and as such he is to possess a dignity that is all his own, and he is to be accorded special homage. Right here we can be certain that we are touching matters that are foreign to the Gospel. Be it understood that I yield to no man in my estimate of the honor and dignity of the Christian ministry. To stand in the world as Christ's ambassador, to represent the power and holiness of His kingdom, to lead men from sin to the Savior; all this is more than royal distinction. But the honor of it lies not so much in the office itself, as in the efficiency with which the office is administered. The ministers mentioned in the New Testament were laborers in the vineyard, and servants of the church for Jesus' sake. And so the worthiest consecration to the ministry is not the tactual blessing of the bishop, or of the archbishop, or of the apostle; not the vote of any assembly or church council, but what is best of all, the blessing of heaven. Search for the very truest apostolic succession not in the tactual succession through a long line of consecrated prelates reaching back to Peter and Paul, but in the apostolic successes of successful preaching of the Gospel

which saves the souls of men. Paul himself was comforted when his ministry was recognized by demonstration of the spirit and power. When under any man's ministry the church is roused to the consciousness of its high privilege, when the backsliders repent of their waywardness, and sinners are converted, read right there a ministerial succession that is catholic in the truest sense and thoroughly apostolic. Under the Gospel no ministry can be regular till God has given it the benediction of His grace.

The true Gospel is divinely simple in its doctrine of the ordinances. Here once more we encounter the intrusion of man-made doctrine. Men incline to multiply ordinances, reading into the list a sacrament of marriage, a sacrament of penance, a sacrament of extreme unction, not to make mention of several more, and you may be assured that the apostles never dreamed of some of them as belonging in the catalogue of ordinances.

And others would import into the two beautiful ordinances which our Savior instituted meanings and relations and limitations, which can be read into the New Testament only by violence, and which are as far-fetched as they are misleading.

Some would make of baptism a sort of magical rite; a ceremony which by itself will confer membership in the kingdom of God. They represent it in effect, if not in set terms, as a washing away of the filth of the flesh, which in fact the apostle expressly declares that it is not.

And some would make of the Lord's Supper an actual participation in the body and blood of the

Lord; while others still would alter its beautiful symbolism of the loving unity of the whole church into a clumsy mechanism for expressing content or discontent with the opinions of their fellow disciples.

But the real Gospel teaching respecting the ordinances quickly clears the air of all these corruptions and perversions, which have been introduced by the pride or the ambition of man. In the New Testament baptism is simply the ceremony in which the penitent confesses his faith in the Lord Jesus. It is the public and evident putting on of Christ, the enlistment in His service. And similarly in the New Testament the Lord's Supper is a memorial service; exactly what the Tridentine symbol declares that it is not; a service of love in which brother is not to be judging his brother, but in which each worshiper is to examine himself, and so eat of that bread and drink of that cup, in the joyful conviction that he is fellowship with all the real disciples of Jesus, and with Christ Himself, the greater brother and Master of us all.

And the true Gospel is divinely simple in its method of making disciples and of receiving them into the kingdom. There is no need now to particularize as to the various stumbling-blocks that have been laid by the art and device of man in the path of penitence. Suffice it to say that under the preaching of the true Gospel by the apostles the people came thronging into the church by the hundreds and thousands. When we read of the early conversions as told us in the book of Acts, and follow the directions given by the apostles

themselves to the early converts, the cause of that phenomenal ingathering becomes apparent at once. They taught that it was the will of God that men should be saved; that all could be saved by acceptance of Jesus Christ, and that all should come to Him by simple faith in Him as Master and Lord. Oh, the glory of this salvation by faith! It is not of works, as Paul expressed it, "*lest any man should boast.*" It was not by costly offerings and sacrifices, which would have turned heaven into a club for millionaires. It was not by building synagogues or churches, not by penance and mortifications of the flesh, but simply and only by faith in the Son of God. To accept Christ, to follow Christ, to continue in the obedience of Christ, this it is to be a Christian. It is possible for any friend in this congregation, who has not been a Christian, to become one this moment. As he sits in this presence he can open his heart to the Lord. In the silence of his pew he can vow that at the first convenient opportunity he will make public profession of his faith. If he does that, and if in heart he is sincere in making that pledge to Christ, he has become a Christian.

Could all our churches and ministers in all the denominations come to see the divine simplicity of the true Gospel, how much more fruitful would be their efforts for the conversion of the world without. It is not required of them that they understand all mysteries and all knowledge to become Christians. It is not necessary that they soar to the mountain tops of ecstatic beatification, or plunge into the depths of cerulean despair in order to become Christians. It is not even neces-

sary that they do all things, or think about all things, just as you and I do, in order for them to become Christians. The one thing essential is that they have faith in the Son of God. Whoever has that, and proves by his life that his faith is actual, is in the kingdom of Christ, and is a fellow citizen with the saints.

I am thanking God daily with all my heart for the simplicity of the Gospel as to this concern of entering the kingdom, for it places me on friendly terms with all true Christians everywhere. The true Gospel is broad and winsome. The religion which it unfolds is not so much a system as it is a life. It aims for results, and it recognizes methods only as they are useful to obtain results. The Sabbath is for man, and in just so many words the Savior declares that man is not for the Sabbath. All the rites and ceremonies of the church are for the blessing and help of man. All its rules and regulations are for the development of the best and noblest in human character. God is not bound. You remember the tale of the Spanish king who was tortured by his devotion to etiquette. He had taken his seat by the open fire, and his servants had retired. The fire presently began to blaze furiously and the king grew uncomfortable. But in the absence of his personal attendants he could not stir from his seat, nor could any of his high *grandees* demean themselves by poking the fire or leaving the presence to summon a servant. So for two long hours the king sat and roasted and toasted, sovereign of Spain, but far from being sovereign of himself or of the situation. But the God we worship has no perplexing

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limitations. He is the helper of the helpless, and He saves the penitents to the uttermost. Bless His holy name for His pure, His simple, His celestial faith, which points the way to the kingdom, and makes the path clear to the weakest of the disciples.



**FAITH THAT BUILDS CHARACTER**



## VI.

### FAITH THAT BUILDS CHARACTER

I CORINTHIANS 3:10—"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."

**I**N the text the apostle assumes as a fact about which no one will venture to make denial, that the foundation of the Christian faith has been laid once for all. As the pioneer missionary among the Gentiles he had declared the truths of the Gospel. He speaks of these, not for any personal adulation, not to plume himself before men for his brave endurance of manifold hardships, but simply and only to announce the fundamental nature of the truths which justified his mission. The main facts of the Christian religion; the Being of God, His loving providence, His revelation in His word and in His Son of Christ as Redeemer and Savior, all these had been faithfully preached and joyfully accepted. The foundations had been laid. They were unchangeable, immovable, the groundwork of all Christian living, the encouragement of all Christian endeavor, the basis of all Christian hope for this world and for the next.

Beyond this which had been furnished the text takes a forward step. The foundation granted, it

is not to be left an unfinished ruin, an ugly blot on the landscape's beauty, a tale of interrupted enterprise, an unsightly monument of spiritual inefficiency and moral bankruptcy. If a foundation, then a superstructure. If God laid the foundation and seems to have paused at that point, it was only in order that man may carry forward the work, not by himself of course, but under divine assistance and guidance. Upon the basic principles stated by the apostle there is to grow up a glorious temple of faith and character. With communities, nations, cities, and neighborhoods it is a social structure, the church of Christ. If time would permit, it would be pleasant to linger here and observe how the great religious movements of the ages are outlined, and the limitations of their development are established by the material and form of the foundations from which they have grown.

But our field for the present discussion is narrower. The text of course applies directly to the broader social movement, but we are warranted in taking its principles as they may affect the development of individual character.

As the apostle has said, the foundation has been laid. On this each one of us is to erect the superstructure of his personal life. How does that work proceed? As to this it is appropriate for each of us to ask himself if he has a Christian character; if the character he has is adapted to the Christian foundation; if its present condition is satisfactory; whether it is suffering from neglect, or misuse, or dilapidation, or if it is advancing in

harmonious development, a pledge of personal happiness, and an offering well pleasing to God.

Inquiry of this kind is important, since the impulse to human activity is so imperative that the process of character building will not pause. While there is life it must continue. All life is motion. Silence, where shall you find it? Not in the forest, for every twig is whispering its tale of life, and every streamlet is haunted by the hum of insects, and every thicket re-echoes with the voice of living creatures, mate calling to mate, in the darkness as in the light.

As for the abodes of men, there is no silence. The poets liken our communities to bee-hives, and they will sing of the "hum" of the city. All day long the coaches and carts and autos rumble and whiz over the pavements; bells are clanging; whistles are shrieking; heavy machinery is driving with a ponderous roar, and when the night settles down, and the stars twinkle from the darkening sky, from window to window the lights flash out, and in many a home where watchers attend some patient sufferer there is the weaker illumination of the night lamp which shines till it is shamed by the outburst of the dawn.

An idle child, who ever saw one, unless it were ill or asleep? That child when awake may neglect his books, and shirk his tasks, but it is never in order to be doing nothing. When he is little he chatters in his crib a couple of hours too early for his elders, and when he is up he is on the move the livelong day. He is like quicksilver, always in a quiver, and always ready to run where he is not wanted. He jumps, he climbs trees and fences,

and tears his clothes, and stones the birds, and scares the chickens, and takes a whip to the beehive, and if by chance he is quiet for half an hour, set it down that he is on the way to some serious sickness, or else that his brain is plotting what he calls "fun," but what his elders name mischief. The years come crowding on, but the same impulse to activity abides. The hardest thing in the world to do is just to do—nothing. Send men out on the seas in a whale ship, and when they are running down before the trade winds, where there is little of pulling and hauling of lines and tackle, the ship soon becomes a lazy man's paradise, till the laziest man aboard gets sick and tired of laziness. Those men will be weaving mats, or scraping the cables, or whittling on whale's teeth to bite off the lagging end of the day.

You perhaps have tried resting in vacation time. Worn with the strain of unremitting labor, when you arrived at the seashore or the mountains, at the first you courted repose. You would lie in a hammock, or stretch yourself on the beach all day, and not stir till it came time for meals. But that mood could not last. As soon as you had made good your over-drafts on the bank of nature, your pent-up energies began to clamor for vent. There were fishes to catch in the brook, or game to shoot in the forest, or picnics and walks and rides with pleasant company. Your resting soon took the shape of working hard.

And the demands of social life stimulate this constitutional impulse toward activity. Competition in business and in the effort to achieve social position is intense. I am told that nowhere in

the world do men in the leadership of manufactures, of finance, of transportation and of trade set themselves to downright hard work as do ours in America. Success is flotsam that must be rescued at once. What the sea of fortune tosses within reach must be seized before the receding billow sweeps it back into the deep. And so because all life is action, and because here in America life is so intense, we will find character developing in action. The hours are certain to be employed. Strength will be put forth in some direction, either for good or for evil; for the profitable or for the indifferent or the mischievous. When the purpose is settled for the good and noble there is of course the heartiest satisfaction. Judge Prescott, father of the historian, once said to George Tichnor, "Take care always to say the same thing; always have ten years' work laid out before you if you wish to be happy."

Another consideration to be noticed along with this is, that every life is building according to some definite plan. Even when the clear purpose is not apparent, there will be the drift toward a fixed plan. You have seen those dissected maps, the toys of childhood, a mere heap of *dissecta membra*, scattered fragments; but there was order in the disorder, a definite place somewhere for every piece. Do you know that every pane of glass has a musical tone? Clamp a pane of glass at its middle point; sprinkle dry sand on its upper side, draw a violin bow firmly across the edge and a clear note will strike the ear. That sand will be tossed up in symmetrical waves, and the lines of the pattern so made will be characteristic of that

particular tone. So every life has a plan, a supreme purpose, a guiding impulse. With Saul, that first king of Israel, that man who vacillated between loyalty to God and disobedience, there was a ruling plan, the plan of stubborn and obdurate self-will, which could put itself into direct contravention of the command of the Most High. The life of Ahab, the bad king, that troubler of Israel, that persecutor of Elijah, followed a plan, the plan of cringing and servile submission to a base-hearted woman. Judas Iscariot, who was now with the disciples, and now with the priests and elders bargaining for the betrayal of his Master, had a plan of life, the plan of satisfying his envy and his greed. Paul, the great apostle, the truest man of his age, was building on the plan of whole-hearted consecration to his Lord. He was the bond-slave of Jesus Christ.

The main thing in the building of character is securing the right plan. As has been seen, there will certainly be activity of some kind. These energies of ours must be employed, if not for Christ, then they will be for some other. If they are not occupied in the duties of devotion, they will flow out in the gaieties of worldly occupations and diversions. If they are not engaged in the Sabbath School, they will be manifested in social visitations and recreations. If they are not concerned with the exercises of religion, they will be heard from in the club, the pool-room, or on the street corner where the loafers congregate.

Building for God then is not so much increase of exertion as it is a better application of energy, a



turning of energy into the right channels. Goethe, the German poet, gives exquisite expression to the thought:

Rest is not quitting  
The busy career;  
Rest is the fitting  
Of self to its sphere.

'Tis the brook's motion,  
Clear without strife,  
Fleeing to ocean  
After its life.

'Tis loving and serving  
The Highest and Best;  
'Tis onward unswerving!  
And this is true rest.

But our attention is to turn toward the upgrowth of consecrated activities, toward the building on God's foundation a structure of Christian life, of Christian character, of Christian faith.

In this connection it would seem hardly needful to insist, since this work employs individual energies, and proceeds under the impulse of individual thought, that it should present wide differences in different persons, and that such differences between persons who have had various kinds of training, and who show varying constitutional traits, should be recognized as perfectly legitimate. And yet, strange to say, this principle is for the most part practically ignored. We have great denominations of Christians that are using all the force of their denominational machinery in the effort to make the Christians for whom they are

responsible think along certain grooves, and to be exemplifications of a standardized pattern in judgment and conduct. In a village there may be two congregations of Christians, and each sets up its own norm for Christian training, and each strives to have the members of its flock duplications of that norm, and as much like each other as the peas in a pod. But is it the divine intention to have all Christians standardized after this fashion, like the parts of a watch, or a motor? Differences in the dispositions of men, differences in their manner of looking at great questions, differences in their view of what constitutes Christian behavior, are irradicable. They inhere in our entire make-up, intellectual and moral. Indeed, such divergencies seem to exist in man's very constitution, and to be inherent in every part of his being.

Now the suggestion of building as employed in the text is replete with the idea of divergence in product. Any architect who has been trained well in his art will advise you that circumstances and materials will govern in working out the proper type of any edifice. Given the marble quarries of Italy, the extensive clay beds of Philadelphia, or the wide reaching forests of a frontier settlement, and you naturally look for variations; for marble palaces in Rome, for houses and palaces of brick in Philadelphia, and for log huts and frame houses on the frontier. And variations of climate also will affect the problem. In Russia, where the mercury of the thermometer has a way of dropping down to the bulb in winter, the houses must have solid walls and double windows, and great

ovens of porcelain built into the home as a part of the construction by way of heating the place. But down in Georgia and the Carolinas the house is spread out on the main floor, the windows are wide and they open like doors on the wide verandas, for there the people need protection from the heat. They must have shade and open breezes.

Now men are constituted differently and are subject to very different influences. One man is emotional. He wants his religion red hot. He likes to shout "Amen!" and "Hallelujah!" and enjoys that kind of religious service the best which will sweep him toward such joyful exclamations. Another is more phlegmatic. He says "Amen!" just as profoundly as the other, but it is kept way down in the depths of his heart. Or he may say it by help of a substantial offering in the contribution box. Both these types are individual. The men develop according to their various temperaments and conditions. Each is a distinct being. His soul, if the idea may be so expressed, has features as well as his body. Made as he is in the image of God he should be original and creative to the full extent of his powers. He cannot be other than himself without self-stultification. Find an illustration here from the pulpit. Offer to two preachers the same text, and they can never preach you the same sermon from it, unless the one pilfered the other's sermon, or unless both happened to pilfer the same sermon from somebody else. Each man must build according to his own individuality, and the development of individuality produces variation.

We have this idea as a direct inference from the text. But the apostle in the twelfth chapter of this same letter discusses the matter more at length. There he speaks of "diversities of gifts," of "differences of administrations" and "diversities of operations," of "diversities of gifts, but the same spirit," of "differences of administrations, but the same Lord," of "diversities of operations, but the same God, which worketh all and in all."

All these diversities of temperament and disposition, and all these various aptitudes are essential to the general welfare. In the mill we cannot have all as treasurers, or all carders, or all spinners, or all weavers, but each one is wanted in his own place, and to be a contributor to the general result.

It is much the same way with character and duty in the church. One man has a gift in prayer. It is a good thing: let him pray. Another has a gift of exhortation, and that is a good thing: let him exhort. Another has financial ability and foresight. He can estimate incomes and outgoes, and steer the bark of religious enterprises away from the reefs of financial wreckage. He is the man who should be elected on the board of trustees, where he may exercise his talents for the benefit of the church. Another can sing most sweetly the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and for him the place is the choir loft. And so in the well-managed church there is a gift for every place and a place for every gift. It was of something like this that Paul was thinking when he wrote, *"God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps in*

*governments, diversities of tongues."* (1 Cor. 12: 28.)

If we were all able to realize this principle of diversity in ability and service, I am convinced that all our church work could be carried forward with far less friction, and with greatly increased satisfaction. It is not for brother to complain of his brother, or to condemn his brother.

"Who made the heart, 'tis He alone,  
Decidedly can try us.  
He knows each chord, its various tone;  
Each spring, its various bias." —Byron.

Let each then build in the line of his best capacity. Let him lay his richest gifts on the altar of consecration. Then shall Christian love yield her sweetest perfumes and Zion rejoice in the fruition of her dearest hopes.

But while one is building on the foundation of Christ, and is employing the spirit of charity toward others in all that he attempts, it is implied that he shall be really building. The last clause of the text, "*Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon,*" is full of significance. It means that there shall be construction, not destruction; erection, not demolition. The foundation that is already laid is to be accepted. Much in the mercy of God has been settled and well settled. When I glance at the world record and follow the struggles of earnest and thoughtful men in their ardent search for truth; a Socrates, a Gautama Buddha, a Confucius; men begirt with superstitions, enveloped in darkness and groping for the light, I can thank God devoutly for our more favorable

situation; that we are not required to trace out truth from the beginning, that God has vouchsafed to us a priceless revelation. I have no sympathy with the efforts sometimes made to overhaul the structure of religious truth and tear up the foundations from the bed-rock on which it rests. That process does not find acceptance in your schools and colleges. When your son takes up the subject of language he is not required to make himself a grammar. He takes the text book which is provided. That process does not work in trade. If a debtor settles an account by presenting a number of gold coins we do not raise a complaint and insist that he give us the value of the account in quartz ore. When we buy a rich vase we prefer it that way, finished and complete with its decorations and glazing, and we never ask the seller to give us in place of it ten cubic feet of the finest kaolin deposit to be found in America.

No. The treasures of the past are useful to us. We cannot escape our indebtedness to our fathers. This community is an inheritance of civilization. Some one cut away the forest. Some one cleared up the rocks. Some one surveyed and graded the streets. Some one has erected the houses of the citizens and the business plants and the schools and the churches, and we enter into the use and profit of it all.

And so we are heirs to religious truth. What God has revealed to us plainly in the Bible it is wise for us to receive with thankful hearts. As to what is not in the Bible; as to what men are inclined to write into the book, that is another affair; but as to the revealed word of God there

is a world of common sense in that counsel given in the book of Hebrews, "*Wherefore letting alone the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*" (Heb. 6: 1, 2.)

Starting thus with the grand foundation of revealed truths, Christian character should rise in general harmony with the foundation. When Ward the sculptor was preparing his colossal statue of Washington, which stands before the sub-treasury in New York, on the spot where the Father of his country took his inaugural oath as President, Mr. Ward occupied two years in careful study. One of his principal problems was to harmonize his proposed statue with the pedestal and with its surroundings. Should he make the figure eight feet tall, or ten, or twenty? How was it to pose? What should be the position of the head, and what the place of the hands? The edifice must not shame the statue: the statue must not shame the edifice. In all there must be congruity, unity, harmony. It is like that with Christian character. While we grant room and wide room for differences in detail, we must insist that the general growth of character shall harmonize with the faith, and that the man must conform his development with the general system of Christianity. It never disturbs me when I find in any congregation some people who are so good that their friends mistake them for members of the church. There is good hope in that circumstance.

The recognition of duty may presently cause the consummation of the fact. But I will confess that where my spirit suffers bitter humiliation is in the occasional condition, when you can live in the same house with some member of the church for a month and in all that time have no grounds for suspecting him of being a Christian. The Lord help us to build better than that!

Viewed in this aspect we may conclude of right character building that it shall be definitely religious. Religion owes it to itself that it shall be religious. Would you regard that expression as in the nature of a platitude.

But religion has not always tried to be religious, or if it has made the attempt, it has sometimes been woefully unsuccessful. In some quarters religion is less religious than dogmatic, less a life than a theory about life, less a concern of character than of creed.

Or sometimes religion has been less religious than a mere form of religion. This was the matter with Judaism, that it was a cultus of rites, of modes, of observances, of ceremonies, all of which dealt with the life of the outward man, while his heart was left inert and barren.

Of course there are seeming advantages in the sort of religion that is simply dogmatic, or ritualistic. These offer convenient standards, all ready made, for measuring the limit of brotherly fellowship. Here is a creed. All right. Subscribe your name. Here is a form. Observe it in the strictness of the letter. Do so and you are a brother, one of the goodly fellowship of the saints, even



while you are breaking half of the commandments!

The other plan which the text contemplates is vastly more troublesome. When you insist on religion being religious, instead of being merely dogmatic or formal, you broaden the scope of personal exertion. You make many duties and you make them for every day in the year. And yet precisely that, a duty for every day, and every day a fresh duty, is the life of Christianity. The condition of building is constancy, persistence. The structure rises stone on stone, brick on brick. We are here in this church to worship God. Soon this congregation will separate. But even when the doors are locked, all the week long as you pass by you behold here a memorial of religion and of God. It is a church, evidently a church. No one mistakes it for a post-office or a hotel. On the face it is a Christian sanctuary.

So should it be with the individual Christian. No one should ever be able to mistake him for anything else than a Christian. Paul was thinking of just that when he wrote to the Ephesians of how Christians grow up into Christ, telling of how "*all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.*"

What faithfulness Christianity imparts to manhood. Put the principles of the Gospel into a man and they make him the most faithful of servants, the most upright and honorable of merchants, the kindest of neighbors and the noblest of men.

Were I set in command of an army I should want Christian men for the rank and file, and Christian men for my captains and colonels and

generals, provided of course that my course was just. Cromwell's Roundheads, who sang psalms and said their prayers before the charge of battle, easily won the day over those drinking, dicing, and carousing cavaliers of King Charles.

Havelock's Christian soldiers in that time of mutiny in India were often made the butt of ridicule by their companions in arms. But when the trial time came they were the men to be trusted. One night when an alarm had been sounded on an outpost, Sir Archie Campbell summoned a brigade to defend the camp. But the brigade he called for had been carousing and were totally unfit for the colors. When that report came to the commander, he said. "Call out Havelock's saints, they are always sober and can be depended on."

This then is the message of the hour, that we build on the Christian foundation; that we *build* on the foundation, and that we build in conformity with the moral and Christian constitution of the foundation.

All that I so far have been saying has its particular application to this college and to this graduating class. This is a Christian college, and with all its zeal for the ripest scholarship and true moral culture, its noblest aim is to crown all by its inspiring Christian culture. In the ten years of its recent active work under President McReynolds it has graduated one hundred and forty-seven students, of whom thirty-five are Christian ministers or Christian missionaries, and seventy are Christian teachers, and holding honorable place in the colleges and schools as instructors of youth. It is a noble record, one not easily to be

excelled, and outside of one or two institutions that might be named it is one that cannot generally be approached. Of the other twenty-five per cent. of the alumni of the college nearly all are religious people, members of Christian churches and supporting the honor of the Master's name.

It remains for this class, every one of whom is a Christian, to uphold that record, not for the record's sake surely, but for your own sake and for that of the Master.

Uphold the Christian faith by your profession of its tenets, by your zealous championship whenever the faith is assailed from any source, and by the consistent faithfulness of your Christian character. Build on the foundation and keep on building, for there is no limit set under the building regulations of the kingdom, for you may build from grace to grace, and from glory to glory.



# FAITH AND SCIENCE IN CONCORD



## VII.

### FAITH AND SCIENCE IN CONCORD

Romans 1: 20—"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."

**H**ERE is plain intimation from the word of the apostle that the natural creation, in some measure at least, is explanatory of the spiritual world; that the course of nature as we behold it is a revealer to some degree of the omnipotence and glory of God.

The passage from which the text is taken is part of the apostle's stern indictment of the high society of his day, and especially of that society as represented by imperial Rome. The aristocrats of Rome were infamously immoral, and their practices were so corrupt as to be a shame to the name of man. His blistering catalogue of the abominations current among the heathen of his day was so characteristic, so true to the life, that the missionaries of our time recognize it as faithfully accurate according to what has befallen their own experience, and the heathen themselves have seen it also. When the New Testament was first circulated in China, the natives who read this first chapter of Romans could hardly be persuaded that

it had not been composed as a direct attack upon themselves.

Now Paul, who charged the heathen with these vices, was holding them responsible for their wickedness. He accuses them for the first with changing the truth of God into a lie, and of worshipping and serving the creature, when all homage was due the Creator. What is the basis for such a charge? How could the heathen know of God as a Creator? He insists that they should have hearkened to the voice of nature; that what may be known of God as manifested in nature was as clear to them as it was to others; that the eternal power and godhead, the invisible things of God, *"are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."* In the natural world there was manifested so much of creative power and wisdom as to leave them without excuse. When he closes this argument against their excessive sins and idolatries the indictment is complete and leaves nothing more to be said.

But if nature had a voice which might have impressed religious truth upon the heathen of the classic world, that same voice should be helpful to religion in this day and age. If nature was once a sister of the faith she should hold the same relationship still. If, as the greatest poet of Germany expressed the thought, the visible universe is

*"The living visible garment of God,"*

His glory should shine forth the more brilliantly as we come to understand natural phenomena and their processes more completely. But does this hold true on close examination? Does it actually



appear that progress in the understanding of natural law, a linking of fact with fact in the visible universe, tends to bring God and His revelation closer to the heart of the believer?

Some there are who will affirm out of hand that no such correspondence can be found. They are atheists and deny altogether that there is any such being as God. Straining at the point in order to be consistent in their unbelief, they repudiate the idea of creation, since to accept that would involve the idea of a Creator. In their pride of doubting they deny finding anywhere any trace of God, and close their eyes and ears to all the testimony about them which a sincere mind should eagerly welcome.

Others meet the statement with question. They are not atheists and would repel such a title with indignation. They simply take the position that in their searching they have not found God, and so that they do not know Him. It is almost with a tone of sadness that they confess their limitation of thought. They admit that nature indicates a correlation in its great forces and they recognize heat as a mode of motion, but as to God they do not know. They will not affirm that God is: they do not know. They will not affirm that He is not: their affirmation is that they do not know.

There are others still, who perhaps are not so scientific, but seem to be actuated by a sportive inclination. They take delight in the expression of religious doubt, not so much I imagine because they are actually doubtful, but from the mischievous impulse to worry and torment their friends who hold religious beliefs. So sometime when you

have been in the depths of the forest on a summer afternoon and have stumbled on a quiet lakelet, lying in the calm of the declining sun, so placid, so motionless that its very quietude challenges your restlessness so that you have the inclination to hurl a rock, or a fragment of a stump, into the midst of it, not to harm anybody, but from sheer eagerness to hear the splash and see the swash of the waters. And so I can conceive how some active mind might be impelled to hurl a boulder in the shape of a hard question into the placid mill-pond of customary thought, not from unbelief at all, but from a pure reaction against monotony, and from a mischievous joy at hearing the splash and swash of startled conservatism.

Then also, and this is what will concern us far more, we have friends who are anxiously seeking the truth and are in great perplexity over the problems which grow out of what we often call "the spirit of the age." They are members of Christian families, and may be Christians themselves. From childhood they have been accustomed to the atmosphere of Christian beliefs, but now there are moments when they find it difficult to reconcile their feelings and their thoughts, their hearts and their heads. They have familiarized themselves with modern scientific literature, and some of the conclusions of science which they have adopted are disturbing to their views of the Bible and of Biblical religion. To their consternation they appear to be drifting into a current of protest against, and of declining sympathy with beliefs that they long have cherished. Though they fear, they think. They cannot help thinking.

And as they think they seem to be getting farther and farther from their religious faith. They dislike to confess it even to themselves, but what they understand of religion and of modern thought seems to set the one into antagonism with the other.

Now if we accept the doctrine of the text that God is seen in nature; that His eternal power and godhead are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, we can readily conclude that all these various doubts of God by the various sorts of unbelievers, and all the fears of good Christians that scientific thought may ultimately struggle with and drive out religious thought, are equally fallacious and baseless. If sometimes there has seemed to be discord between the voices of nature and religion, such a result could easily have arisen from misunderstanding on the one side or on the other, and possibly on both sides; in which case the appropriate remedy would seem to be the right adjustment of religious thought for itself, and of scientific thought for itself.

As to there being misapprehensions on the religious side, we have known of such to our sorrow. The Bible is continually represented as responsible for teachings and interpretations which have long since passed out from intelligent thought. It is possible in this matter that the clergy may have been somewhat remiss. When I say this I am not to be taken as bringing an accusation against the pulpit for any intentional shortcomings, for taken as a body there is no class in the community which is more thoroughly conscientious and outspoken. But the pulpit has so many

practical subjects to handle, and has to din into unwilling ears so many practical duties, subjects which seem to the ministry of grave importance, that some matters which they deem of minor importance, because they understand them for themselves so well, may get passed over. Then, too, the ministers while preaching will make free use of Biblical expressions and figures, which to them have a perfectly clear and sensible meaning, and they sometimes forget how many exploded notions the general public attach to the same figures, and so hold these exploded notions to be part and parcel of Bible teaching.

In our early colonial period the Bible was made responsible for the delusion respecting witchcraft. In Boston and Salem, if some one nursed a grudge against some poor old soul who was about ready to drop into the grave, he had only to accuse her of a too great fondness for cats, and of riding by night on a broomstick, to set ministers and judges of the courts to quoting from the Bible to show that he should be drowned or burnt as a witch. It was a pitiable mishandling of Scripture, but now, thank heaven, of the far distant past.

But erroneous interpretations of Scripture, which have been discarded by certain classes in the community, will still linger with other classes, to their serious detriment and perplexity.

A familiar example of this kind of erroneous idea appears in that notion of a literal hell, burning and fuming with fire and brimstone. Now those passages of the New Testament which employ this figure in reference to the future state of the wilfully impenitent are understood by the

clergy to be pictorial representations, and not the statement of a literal fact at all. Ministers who are trained in Biblical interpretation, when they think of the terrors of the afterworld, shudder at the possibilities of spiritual suffering that will await the stubbornly wicked; the possibility of estrangement from God, the agonies of unavailing remorse, the stings of conscience awakened when the hour of repentance has gone by, of the sorrow of a soul filled with consuming hatred, when it should be throbbing with love. Such spiritual retribution is far more dreadful to contemplate than any kind of physical pain that can be imagined. Because they do not think for themselves in terms of a literal hell, the clergy may sometimes forget that the people do not see with their eyes, and cannot be made to see, except by constant iteration and reiteration. Literalism in concept is the tendency of the untrained mind, and for this reason great care must be exercised in the explanation of the inner meaning of Scriptural imagery.

Another crude notion respecting the Bible, and one which misleads many minds into thinking that there must be conflict between science and religious thought, is that the Good Book teaches that the universe and the earth were created in six literal days of the length of twenty-four hours each. Here we touch once more the field of interpretation. It is literalism which springs to the hasty conclusion that the day of creation was twenty-four hours long. In the Genesis story there is not a hint of the "day" being limited to any set number of hours. In fact, those "days"

were marked by a period of darkness, followed by a period of light, and how long each of these were there is no possibility of telling. I do not know of a respectable theological seminary anywhere which would venture to limit the creative "day" in the duration of its time. Indeed from the age of Augustine, that great preacher of the fifth century, it has been understood in the church that the "days" of Genesis were extended periods, days of God, and measured by unknown thousands of our years.

But when the pulpit employs this broad interpretation respecting the creative days, we must understand that there are many people who do not comprehend the matter in this way, and because they read the Genesis story and think of the "days" as held to the strict twenty-four hour limit, they fall into great trouble of mind when they are confronted with any other view.

And so I am persuaded that the ministry should give more definite instruction on these, and other topics that are kindred to them, so that the people may be better informed as to what the Bible does teach, and what it does not. When we are well rid of exploded interpretations of Scripture, which make the Word of God of none effect, we shall all breathe more freely, and have much greater comfort in the joy of our faith.

But while we are insisting that we acquire right views of Holy Scripture, we must also insist with equal fervor that we secure right views of science. Much runs current in scientific thought which another generation will not recognize by that name. True science contents itself with facts that are

established as such, and with the explanations which consort with the facts, and with all the facts. Clever conjecture is not science, even when it is indulged by scientific men. The moment that a biologist, or a chemist, ventures from the realm of inductive experimentation to that of conjecture, in that instant he becomes unscientific. There is no guess-work which is more untrustworthy, more apt to be wild and absurd, than the dream flights of men of science, when imagination beguiles them from fact to indulgence in fancy.

When we comprehend this principle and distinguish the facts of science which are well established, from the guess-work of gentlemen, who in many departments are really scientific, and when we approach the teachings of the Bible, not those as conceived by novices or the superstitious, but rather those which are indorsed by men who understand the laws of interpretation and what the Bible actually teaches by its beautiful imagery, it will be found that the most of the seeming discrepancies between religion and scientific thought, which the unbelieving delight to harp upon, will have utterly vanished.

The apprehension of conflict between Biblical thought and scientific thought is further relieved, when we consider that each has its own separate realm, and that in the nature of things there can be no real conflict between them. How will you break a beam of light with a club? See that sun-beam streaming through a cranny in the wall, with the motes dancing there merrily in the sunshine. You lift the club, you cleave the air, your

stroke does not fail, but the sunshine is still there, and the motes are dancing just as gaily as before. The club and the sunbeam cannot antagonize each other. They exist apart from each other, and each is subject to laws that apply only in moderate degree to the other.

It is even more so with true science and religion. Science deals with things that are seen: religion deals with thoughts and emotions. Science investigates the material universe: religion concerns the immaterial soul. No discovery that is possible to man can obliterate the identity of human consciousness. I am the same "I" that I was ten years ago, or forty years ago. I can to-day recall experiences in the home when I was less than four years of age, and other experiences that happened in my school life from four and a half years onward, and those experiences stand out fresh and clear on the tablets of memory. That identity of consciousness, which all men of sane condition possess, completely confutes and deposes of the mechanical theory of life. Love, duty, memory, worship; all the higher functions of spiritual being, are in a sphere apart from that of mechanical force. And because this is true, there are many who are eminent in the scientific world who are sincere and devout believers in the Christian faith.

But the special bearing of the text is to the effect that the material universe is to be a teacher of God; that true science is to be the sister of true religion. And this is a sentiment which I can heartily indorse. For science is the unsparing foe of superstition and delusion, both of which are prejudicial to simple faith. We humans are woe-



fully prone to self-deception. We declaim vociferously against fraud, and before the day is out we yield ourselves a prey to some current humbug. Society is a fertile field for the cultivation of every noxious weed of imposture. It would seem almost that the people prefer a lie to the truth, a quack to reputable physician, or the voice of a false prophet to the testimony of a veritable revelation from God. How many shrink and cower at thought of the spooks about a midnight graveyard, which have no existence, while they fail to follow the word of God, which does exist. How many esteem it a portent of calamity to overturn the salt, or to fracture the mirror, and who yet make no bones of cracking three or four of God's commandments. It is a notorious trait of superstition to discard faith on pretense of its incredibility, while it will easily accept all manner of fabrications which are doubtful on the face. Superstition will strain at a gnat of sense, while it greedily gulps down a camel of nonsense. In this mood it will read into the Bible its own notions. and read out of the Bible the essence of God's teachings. I have known such superstitious people who have appealed to the Bible to support their claims of ghosts and spirits, but who would shut the book with a bang when it taught that Christ could rise from the dead.

Science then renders us a great, an inestimable service, when it aids us in ridding the world of falsehood. Science is a standing police, with special warrant to slaughter delusions and shams for the mad dogs that they are. It is a beneficent work. Let the falsehoods perish! If they lurk in

the speculations of science, kill them and science will be all the more scientific. If the falsehoods lurk in my theology, let science chase them out. I want none of them. If I read errors into my Bible, still again let science search, arrest, smite, destroy. My Bible will be the better guide when it is the real revelation of God that speaks, and not some false and superstitious error which lies in wait to deceive the very elect. As science disposes of the errors that are harmful to the faith, as it rids the world of sham and humbug, it is doing a work for the Bible and for religion which man should applaud, and which God will bless.

But Paul is insisting that nature discloses the eternal power of God. This is our own conviction. Our first intelligent view abroad, when our judgment has come to the exercise of its function, is a revelation of majesty in the heaven above and in the earth beneath. As we survey the strong based mountains, the swelling seas, the fruitful lands, and the shining stars, and inquire whence they came, the instant reply of the unbiased mind will be that they came from God. The mighty forces of the universe must flow from a Being mightier than they, from an Infinite Being, and that Infinite Being is God. Even the untutored mind will reach this conclusion and hold it firmly. In the wars of the Vendee in France an atheistical commander of the insurgent forces threatened the peasantry with the destruction of their church steeples, so that they would have nothing left to remind them of God and religion. "But," said one of these peasants, "you cannot help leaving us the stars." That man might have been untaught in the

schools, but the skies had taught him the power and glory of God.

Will any teaching of real science diminish the weight of this testimony of the natural world to the divine power? On the contrary the more that science multiplies our estimate of the universe, the higher is its teaching of the power of God. That peasant with his unassisted eye might have counted some ten thousand of those gleaming witnesses of God in the heaven above him. But science gazing into the same heaven with her instruments of precision calls out of the abysses of space star blazing beyond star in an infinite outreach of creation, which has no end in sight. By as much as science extends our view of the limits of God's universe, by just so much it magnifies His authority and glory.

The glittering stars  
By the deep ear of meditation heard,  
Still in their midnight watches sing of Him.  
He nods, a calm. The tempest blows His wrath.  
The thunder is His voice, and the red flash  
His speedy sword of justice. At His touch  
The mountains flame. He shakes the solid earth  
And rocks the nations. Nor in these alone,  
In every common instance God is seen.

—James Thomson.

But Paul is declaring also that the visible universe sets forth the wisdom and goodness of God. Not only does it disclose His power, but His godhead also. Through nature, so says Paul, "*His Godhead is clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.*" By the term "godhead," Paul means more than deity, he means the power

of goodness. He means that God's natural world is beneficent. In the natural world the first thought of God is power, but the next thought is love. This is a great and excelling truth. There is of course a still higher manifestation of the Divine love, that which is met in the Gospel in fairest lines, in the gift of His eternal Son, in the redemption song, and in Christ's leading many sons to glory. But even if love is written in lower form in the face of nature, it is still written there boldly. Read love in the supplies in store to meet every necessity of man, and frequently to afford him comfort and luxury. Read love in the certainties of natural law. When your physician has found a remedy for a certain disease, he has reason to expect that under similar conditions with another patient that remedy will perform the like office again. And it is that way with natural law everywhere. When in any instance we discover the law, we are assured of how it will operate afterward. God has constructed an orderly universe, and order produces harmony of action, and harmony of action is a manifestation of goodness in Him who so constructed His universe. Does man still meet difficulty and trial here and there? But these incidents detract nothing from the excellence of the general plan. It was a wise saying of Pascal, "Nature has perfections in order to show that she is the image of God: and defects in order to show that she is only His image."

Can our studies in nature, as we continue their pursuit, ever disturb the evidence of plan, of harmony, of goodness, of righteous order? Progress in investigation can only confirm and extend our

conception of the divine majesty and mercy. For this natural law, when the idea is sifted to the bottom, is after all nothing more than the mode of God's working. Law is inert of itself. All the laws of navigation never sailed a ship. There had to be wind to swell the sails, or steam to fill the boilers, and then a guiding hand at the helm. All these excellent laws of nature require behind them a Living Force, a directive Intelligence, a merciful Purpose, and when you come to that you are in the presence of Infinity, and of Infinite Love.

And so we are to dismiss the idea, if ever we held it, that science is in conflict with faith, or faith with science. Some scientific theories may conflict with some religious theories, but that amounts to nothing in the long run. So some religious theories conflict with other religious theories, and some scientific notions combat other scientific notions. But as for the fundamental truths which are basic in both science and religion, they are at one with each other. All real knowledge combines with other knowledge for the elevation of man. What we must insist upon is that having some knowledge shall not be made the pretext for conspicuous lack of other knowledge which is of more importance. Let no man plead when he is accused of not knowing the conformation of a continent that he is thoroughly familiar with the structure of a tadpole. Let no man plead when he has neglected the culture of his soul before God that he is quite well up in organic chemistry, or in the manipulations of the X-ray. Exigencies are to be faced in soul experience, when the soul will need all the

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support and comfort which an established faith in God can bestow.

So let our college men and women study the earth and the stars all that they please, but let them not neglect to search for God and abide in His presence. Let the soul ascend to the highest peaks of the mountains of wisdom. Let it gather its contributions of knowledge from every source, in the serene confidence that wisdom shall supplement and explain wisdom, that each attainment of knowledge shall be a stepping-stone to higher knowledge, so that as we advance we shall arrive at larger trust, to holier sympathies, to more heavenly graces of character, growing more and more into the knowledge of God and the peace of Christ our Savior.

# THE FAITH IN SINCERITY





## VIII.

### THE FAITH IN SINCERITY

ROMANS 13: 7—"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."

HERE in the plainest of terms the apostle settles the relationship of Christians to the state. In the ardor of their first enthusiasm, when they embraced the Gospel with all their hearts, some might have imagined that God's claim to the chief place was equivalent to His requiring the whole place, and that in consequence their allegiance to the Gospel would dissolve their allegiance to the civil magistrate. If they were loyal to the church they might cast off obligation to the state. If they attended divine worship they might neglect the civil assembly. If they contributed freely for the support of the Gospel they might on that plea escape payment of the civil tax. If they honored Christ they might neglect Caesar. But Paul exposes the error of such a conclusion. For, as he puts it, the state is just as necessary as the church. Both are of God. "*The powers that be,*" so he declares, "*are ordained of God.*" In other words, the state is God's expression of order in civil administration, as the church is His expression of order in spiritual administration. Proceeding in his argument, Paul also pleads the

obligation of conscience. There is wrath, the civil penalty; but more, there is conscience, the moral penalty. "*Wherefore,*" so he argues, "*ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.*" Right, justice, and personal honor are all involved. The citizen derives benefits from the state; protection of life, protection of property, the enforcement of all the rights which he holds under the law. In return for these he is in honor bound to discharge every civil obligation. Because he is a Christian he is not to be the worse citizen, but the better. Whatever the state can claim from him he is bound to satisfy, and so all the more because he is a Christian, and for conscience' sake. So he concludes, "*Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.*"

All this argument rests as you perceive on the basis of natural justice, which springs from the existence of God and His moral government. Such natural justice reaches every man, whether he has taken the position of a Christian, or whether he has not. The universal consciousness of civilized man recognizes the difference between right and wrong, and applauds the right and criticises the wrong. Taking men as we find them, and cutting out such cases as affect directly their individual interest, and they like to see fair play, and fair play is only another term for justice. In all the great business houses of the nation you will find a high standard of personal honor. It used to be said of an honorable tradesman that his word is as good as his bond, and there are as many

such honorable business men to-day in proportion to the population as ever were known. We like to hear a man speak the truth; we like to see him pay his just dues; we like to see him square, and upright, and faithful to every honest obligation. You remember how Adam Bede, in George Eliot's book, stands at his carpenter's bench, with his sleeves rolled up, and singing as he shoves his plane,

Let all thy converse be sincere,  
Thy conscience as the noonday clear.

That picture is a master stroke. As if through a window in his bosom we see the white soul of the man. He will do right by all men and harm to none. He will detest all shams and trickery. His outward life will be the reflex of his inward thought. As he stands at that bench he is the image of truth, of sincerity, of noble manhood.

At the present I am interested in tracing the attitude of a young man, especially a college man, who has sincerity of disposition and who begins to think about religious subjects. What shall be the attitude of such a man in respect to the faith, if he be honest and sincere and inclined to render to all their dues? Can such a man, even if he has not yet made a profession of religion, continue to ignore religion? Suppose him, if he is not yet a Christian, to be an admirer of Jesus, that pattern of the ages. Suppose him to be a regular attendant on Christian worship, but not as yet connected with the church in regular membership. What does such a man owe himself, and the church, and

the cause, with which he is in modest, or silent, sympathy?

First of all, taking the narrowest view of his obligations, I insist that sincerity and natural justice combined will require that his every expression in reference to religion shall be absolutely truthful. Manliness demands that. Manliness abhors deception of every kind and degree. Do you realize why that story of George Washington and his hatchet obtained such currency in the early days of this country? The humorists have made great sport of the incident and have set the younger generation to laughing at the mere sight of a hatchet. And yet in the story a great principle was involved. George Washington had some faults, but he was a man. He could face kings on the throne, plotters in Congress, schemers in the army, and dare the midnight ice cakes of the Delaware, or the privations of the wilderness which swarmed with hostile savages. No man ever accused him of fear. Not a drop of coward blood defiled his veins. His countrymen, who hold him in lasting veneration, love to think of the boy who was overtaken in a fault and who dared face the consequences without attempting prevarication or deceit. The nobility of character in the boy which taught him to scorn a lie was prophecy of the noble character of the man. Falsehood, subterfuge, subtlety, profession of a faith that is not, are all unworthy of honest manhood, and if anywhere in the world a man should tell the truth and speak the honest sentiments of his soul it is when he places his hand on the altar of the living God. No forced service is wanted there. Those who

worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. No deceptions there! Blessed be the God of truth, for His eye pierces every disguise. No use for the lip to utter prayers that do not come from the heart, for God sees the heart. The adoration which He will accept must be the willing offering of devoted love. The prayers which He answers shall be those of the penitent and contrite, who lift their cry to the heavens because they really have hope of answer. Because God is the God of truth we may be certain that He will require our religious expressions to be truthful, to be expressions of the honest convictions of the soul. Right here is the place for great plainness of speech. Religion is not a matter with which we can be playing fast and loose. Imagine some man who is not yet in the church and who is inclined to skeptical opinions to ask what God is likely to require of him. He rather likes to go to church. The aesthetic influences of the sanctuary affect him pleasantly. He enjoys the service of sacred song, when the congregation heartily joins the choir in chanting the praises of the Most High. And he likes the straightforward discussion of great themes which he hears from the pulpit, even when the conclusions drawn oppose his own. What is such a man to do? Shall he profess that he has faith, when he has no faith? Shall he pretend that he is a Christian, while he is still a pagan, or at best a nothing-arian? Never! The faith of a Christian has its firm foundation laid in fact. It must be an active, positive, living faith. Profession of faith and possession of faith must keep step together. To be sincere, profession

must not advance one inch beyond the actual faith that is experienced. In the name of righteousness, and of the soul's honor, I would advise any man, if he does not care whether sin or the Gospel triumphs, not to pretend to care. If he does not believe that the Bible contains a Divine revelation, let him be honest about it, and not speak or act a falsehood. If he really disbelieves in God, if he is an atheist, let him not hoist false colors. God wants no false, no make-believe service from any man.

Religious expression should be truthful also in its expression of natural feeling. It is in this matter of feeling, of religious emotion, that we discover no little difficulty. The spiritual progress of many persons who have really desired to acknowledge God has frequently been blocked by the problem of adapting their religious experience to that of others. But religious experience is not to be all on the same pattern, any more than the grass blades in the meadow; any more than the shape of the trees in the forest. As it develops religious life will show many phases. What is a flower? We will not weary patience with a scientific definition; it will suffice to say that a flower is a blossom, and that it is a flower, whether it be a blossom of clover, or the head of a sunflower, or a rich red rose, or the modest violet. But there are not more varieties of blossoms, giving adornment to garden and field, than there are varieties of Christians.

One phase of the Christian life is mystical. The Guyons, and Fenelons, and Edward Irving live near to God and have delight in His presence.

They may devote much time to private meditation and self-examination, and they are very anxious as to their personal standing with God.

Another phase of the Christian life is more active. It is that of the missionary; of the Pauls, the Judsons, the Moodys, the Chapmans; the men who burn with a resistless ardor to declare the Gospel and convert the world to the service of their Lord.

Another phase of the Christian life is philanthropic. It is anxious for souls, but it follows Christ in caring also for the physical needs of men. The Howards, the Fryes, the Florence Nightingales, the Clara Bartons, who go to the prisons and the hospitals, reforming abuses, nursing the sick, and offering the hand of mercy and hope to the despairing, are doubtless engaged in their Master's work.

But if there are different forms of Christian work, there are also different forms for giving expression to the Christian spirit. Some Christians are intensely emotional. They are affected by circumstances and they show what they feel. When they are happy in their Savior they are very happy, and they manifest their feeling in emotional ways.

Others have a more even temperament and are in consequence less demonstrative. Their habitual self-control forbids any precipitancy of action, and their natural caution protects them from anything that savors of extravagance of speech or thought. Such differences are natural and fundamental.

Because of such variations in temperament and training I no more expect all Christians to act alike, or even to enter the kingdom by the gate of the same experience, than for all the blossoms to come out in June, or than for all my friends to speak with the same tone of voice.

And yet some good people are trying their best to cultivate a Christian experience according to a model set by some one else. Can that be wise? Does God require of us anything like that? Surely not. Each life has to be the product of its own individuality. Try as we may we cannot be other than ourselves. What God asks of us is that each one, according to his own nature, shall render the best he has to the Savior. If a man does this willingly, gladly, honestly, laying on the divine altar the offering of a consecrated heart and life, he has right to expect the divine approval. But there should be no forcing of nature, no mimicry of the life of others, no pretenses in the house of faith.

It is somewhere about here that we touch the basis of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. The rabbis had set up false standards of righteousness, standards which might have come naturally to a religious crank, but which were altogether unnatural to the average worshiper. But the rabbis measured the piety of all worshipers by these arbitrary standards. The life and the attendant observances which they required might be natural or not; might be an honest expression of the soul, or not; still all who wished to be counted as holy must conform to the standard. In this manner the religious life as exemplified by the ordinary



Pharisee became a sheer pretense, a deception, an elaborate sham, a simulation which had no corresponding activity of the heart. And so it befell that the life of the Pharisees became false all through, so that the Lord accused them of being hypocrites, play-actors, for in all their religious worship they were acting a part. Their religion became a thing which they could assume or lay aside, as a man does with his Sunday coat. All the week long they could be cheating some poor widow or building up some elaborate scheme to defraud a neighbor, but when the Sabbath day came round they would put on their robes with the prescribed fringes, and bind their phylacteries on forearm and forehead, and pull a long face, and make long prayers to be seen and heard of men. And of what profit was all that? Of none whatever, so far as religion was concerned. And Christ exposed the hollowness of the sham and called them vipers and whited sepulchers. And to-day the Lord wants no pretenses in His kingdom. There is to be no pretense whatever in the name of religion. Every such thing is counterfeit. It has a false ring. God asks no second-handed experiences from any soul. When He opens the door of grace to any one He does not ask that man to imitate the experience of a Peter, or of a Martin Luther, or of the saintliest saint that ever offered a prayer. He does not ask the penitent to simulate a single virtue. He does not ask him to profess a single emotion that he does not feel. What He asks is the man's life, his love in its natural outflow, and to have these dedicated to the Savior in righteous obedience to the precepts of the Gos-

pel. No one who honestly desires to be a Christian but can give all that, and the instant he does so sincerely, he is a Christian.

But religious expression, while it should be truthful in the consideration which we have been examining, should also be truthful in its completeness. And it is possibly the discussion of this aspect of the case which is after all the more important. For it is quite certain, if misrepresentation of religion is sometimes made in the pretense of having it, when one does not have it; that there is far more misrepresentation in the repression of religious feeling which actually exists.

We are all well acquainted with good people who are so nearly Christians already that there seems to be no good reason why they should not be altogether so, and yet they resist their better inclinations, which would place them definitely on the side of religion. What I am now claiming for such is that in common honesty, in sincerity and in truth, provided the religious feeling exists, it should not be hidden under a bushel, but should be honestly acknowledged. Just as one should pay a just debt; as he should honor the civil magistrate; as he should show gratitude for a favor done him by a friend, so when God stirs his heart and gives him a fair hold on the faith of the Gospel, true manliness of character should urge the confession. For here is a gift, a royally precious gift. Without faith as we travel this world we are but children of a passing day. We come up as a flower; we are cut down; we wither away. Lacking faith, what is there before us now or hereafter? What in such case is the future but a shadowy dream,

scattered by the touch of sickness, dissipated by the icy finger of death!

But with faith, faith in God, faith in the Bible, faith in Jesus Christ, life comes to me as an eternal possession, and love becomes a heritage whose validity of title no shock of time, no crash of colliding worlds can ever impair, and heaven opens before us with all its glorious perspectives, the final home of all our hopes and aspirations. Set my foot once on the bridge of faith, whose further end is close to the throne of Omnipotence, and I stand triumphant. What then is sorrow? I mock at it! What is death? I defy it! What is the grave? I trample it under foot! Now, when God so sweeps away my darkness by teaching me to trust Him, common justice and the instinct of fair dealing bid me express the fact.

That men, honorable men, are ever reticent on this religious question springs, so it appears to me, from the mistake of confusing the main issue with a subordinate issue. Too often men set aside the thought of their duty to express their allegiance to God by busying themselves with the question of how much neglect and disobedience God will pardon. Possibly they are not stating it in just that way, but that is the practical outcome. If God were to send His angel into the world, and he were to draw a line as a limit to disobedience, it would be a very reckless soul that could imagine himself as defying God, and abusing His grace, and continuing right on in rank insubordination right up to the edge of that line; and yet many are practically doing that very thing all the time. The man who lives in conscious disregard of his

religious duty takes that stand because he believes himself still on the side of mercy, and that somehow or other God will pardon all his disloyalty and sin.

But must we not see in this attitude a tinge of insincerity, and of misrepresentation by concealment? And what is this but a species of hypocrisy? For be it remembered that there are two kinds of hypocrites, those who assume virtues without warrant, and the others who assume not to have virtues which they actually possess.

I have known men who were braggarts of iniquity; overswollen gasbags of swaggering prevarication. Such boast of affrays and debaucheries till you might esteem them the basest of mankind, and yet possibly their worst affray was flinging a boot-jack at a howling cat on a back fence, when the cat was so far off that he couldn't scratch back; and their most riotous dissipation taking a glass of pink lemonade at an apple stand! You might well call that the hypocrisy of vice! It springs from the same motive as hypocrisy of virtue; for the one hypocrite pretends that he is better than he is in order to secure the applause of men; while the other pretends that he is worse than he is for precisely the same reason. Which of the two is to be estimated as the worse? It is difficult to discriminate between them. And yet you recall Hamlet's counsel to his mother, "Assume a virtue if you have it not." Hamlet would say that if there is to be choice in insincerity, let it be of that stamp that leans toward the good. And when we push the matter to the end we find that the hypocrite who covers up his short-

comings with the cloak of virtue, even if it be no more than a cloak, is unconsciously paying tribute to virtue. He has a preference. He chooses to stand well with the good, and that is better than wishing to stand well with the bad.

But we were discussing the hypocrisy of badness. What is there of nobility in that? What sincerity is there in pretending to lack faith, when we really possess something of the faith? Why pretend to doubt the Bible, when at heart we accept it? Why appear at odds with the church, when we really wish it prosperity and success? That attitude surely is something short of uprightness. It savors of acting a part. It is hiding light that should be shining for the benefit of others. The more I ponder this matter the more I see in it the necessity for absolutely square-dealing. If a man believes in God, perfect honesty bids him serve God openly. If he hopes some day to be a Christian, let him confess it. If he is seeking the light, let him make the want known. Let him follow the words of Paul, "*Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor,*" and I may add, worship to whom worship.

And religious expression should be truthful in completeness for the sake of moral progress. We advance in our attainments in mathematical science by keeping up to the full limit of what we have been able to discover. Combining what we have already comprehended we reach out and on till we span chasms, and lay a mind measure on the curving seas, and fathom the depths of the

star distances as they circle in the infinitude of space. But that instant in our mathematical studies that any one of us ceases to employ his principles, even if it be but one of the simplest of the axioms, we are at a standstill, and progress terminates.

It is the same in the realm of ethics and religion. Character growth demands that the soul shall make working use of the fundamental principles of the faith. It is by putting the principles of the Gospel into practice that Christians develop in goodness. Does some one reason that it is sufficient to believe down in the depths of his heart: but all the experience of the ages proves that it is not enough. Test it a moment in business affairs. You believe in your heart that a certain investment is good, and that if you were to buy a hundred shares of that security, you would soon have good returns. The man who holds it is willing to sell and you wish to buy. But when you two meet, in place of asking if he will sell, and at what rate, you start in to talk of the weather, and the last elections, and of when the war is likely to end; of everything else in fact but of that security. How soon will that course produce you a profit by help of that particular investment? But you do not make your trades in that manner! Of course you do not. But that is the way that many people are treating the faith, and as a result they make no advancement, and their sympathy with the faith is so well concealed that it helps no one else, and gives them no encouragement. Here lay the trouble with the poet Byron. It is a fact that is not generally known

that Byron had longings time and again for the peace of the Christian. Yet it is on record that he wrote to a gentleman, whose wife had offered prayers for his conversion, and his letter stated in effect that skepticism was a necessity of his nature, and yet that he almost hoped that he might be like Maupertius and Henry Kirke White, who began in infidelity and ended in firm belief. But how came Maupertius and Kirke White to escape from the pit of infidelity? When they gained a truth, they made use of it, and truth joined with truth soon framed up a ladder by which they climbed to the security of a vital faith in the Redeemer. This was Byron's privilege, but he chose to follow the flowery path of guilty pleasure and did not care to acknowledge God.

I am thinking what a change would presently come to all our congregations if absolute sincerity toward God were to become the general rule. In one of his beautiful hymns Bonar sings,

Be what thou seemest, live thy creed,  
Hold up to earth the torch divine.

I like the ring of that. The voice of true manhood is eloquent in that.

Let the creed be the shortest possible, "*I believe in God.*" Live up to that. Soon the man who believes in God, and lives out that belief, will believe in the Son of God, the Savior. But when one accepts the Son and reads the Bible, he will soon be believing in the Holy Ghost, in the Holy Church universal, in the resurrection of the dead, in the forgiveness of sins and in the life everlasting. A sincere faith in God as Creator and Father

cannot halt at that point: it will develop. Not only does a noble faith become a man, but it adds new charm to manhood. It was my privilege several years ago to attend a meeting of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and hear an address by the man who was the first Chief of the Brotherhood, Mr. Arthur. I had long admired the steadiness of his course at the head of the Brotherhood, and the soundness of his judgment in critical moments, when men of less balance were swept from their feet. Wherein lay the secret of his power, not with the men only, but also with the great railroads, which held him in high esteem? Was he unusually gifted? Had he a clearer vision than other men? If so it was not specially apparent. But when I heard him recommend the Bible to those men, and declare to them that the noblest type of a man was the true Christian, the source of his poise of thought and of his wisdom was solved. He was not ashamed to believe in God, nor to declare his faith before all men. That faith had become the joy of his life, and its strength also.

And so I am urging upon all the absolute honesty of faith. Fear not to confess and live all that you believe. Render to all their dues: to God, worship; to your neighbor, your influence, which may help him to a nobler hope; and to yourself all the joy and promise of the Gospel, with its far-reaching perspectives, which open toward the blissful ages of the life eternal.



## FAITH OUTSHINING



## IX.

### FAITH OUTSHINING

MATTHEW 5: 16—"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

**T**HE Gospel of Jesus is light and salvation; all this, and nothing less. You may distinguish all imitation gospels by this token, that they deal in obscurities—the light is not in them—and that they lack the power of salvation in that they leave men still in their sins. They give high place to men who are steeped in sinfulness. They do not enforce repentance. They offer promise to the reprobate, while he remains a reprobate. They peddle indulgences for the hereafter for money, and indulgence for the present for social recognition.

The true Gospel has no countenance for anything like that. Christ converses with the Pharisee. Will He offer him a seat in His kingdom? Surely; but on what terms? Nothing less than that he learn to become a new man. He must cease to do evil and turn to doing well. He must abandon all his religious fictions and obey the truth. He must forsake all his cheatings and hard bargainings. He must subdue his pride and purify all his relationships, both with his own soul, and with the soul of things outside himself.

And our Christ, who is no respecter of persons, puts all men on the same footing. His salvation saves men by making them worth saving. When a boy or a man becomes a real Christian you find him a different person. He has a new sight which enables him to see with the Lord's eyes. He has a new speech; not cant, for that is detestable, but a pure speech which is fit for the Master's presence. He has a new moral tone, and a new kind of judgment, both of duty to help righteousness forward, and to frown upon sinfulness of every kind and degree. By all these changes to-day, just as it did nineteen centuries ago, the world takes knowledge of a man that he has been with Jesus.

Something of this general improvement in the man who has become a Christian appears in his new-found solicitude for the welfare of others. Once he isolated himself from all spiritual responsibility in respect to others, but his new walk with the Master quickly developed a new sense of obligation. You may believe that when the Lord cast the devil out of any poor soul He cast out the narrow selfish spirit too. And now when the devil of irreligion goes out, selfishness goes along for good company. Every real Christian convert whom you have ever known has been anxious to bring his friends to the Lord. Like Andrew, who found the Messiah and hurried to tell his brother, the Christian wishes all who are dear to him to share his joy in the Savior.

I have said that the young Christian has a new sense of responsibility. The unregenerate man cares chiefly for himself. He views all lines of

action from the standpoint of how that may inure to his comfort, his pleasure, or his profit. Will some course that he is pursuing prove a snare to another? No matter for that: let the other look out for himself! When he is told that his example is hurtful to some one he evades responsibility by saying with Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

But when Christ comes to that man conscience wakens. The Christian knows that others are affected by all that he does, and that in a way he is the keeper of all his brothers, and so as his Master has taught he lets his light shine.

Now this light, which the Lord uses as illustration of that divine truth which the Christian has received, is one of the subtlest, and yet one of the mightiest forces of nature. It was the first child of creation. When formless matter was sleeping in the bosom of primeval chaos, God spake; and at the word light flashed into being. As Tennyson sings in the Memoriam,

*God and nature met in light.*

Three characteristics appear in light which render it peculiarly representative of the truth of God. Light has power. We have come to the season when the Creator is renewing His annual miracle of the Springtide.

Sweet sun gleams come and go  
Upon the hills, in lanes the wild flowers blow,  
And tender leaves are bursting everywhere.

—*Todhunter.*

Nature is rousing herself from her long repose. From every hillside and garden the verdure is

leaping up in welcome. The whole earth throbs with the mystery of life. And what is the occasion? Merely the longer and brighter day, the more glowing sunshine. So the dull earth enjoys the cherishing warmth, and the gentle dews distil, and the torpid powers of dormant plants are stirred, and in a day whole trees burst forth in a splendor of blossoming.

And the light is God's agent for purification. How man is eternally poisoning and destroying his atmosphere, polluting life at its fountain head. Ten thousand chimneys pour out reeking fumes of foul gases, laden with corruption and death. Every city, every dwelling-place of man is manufacturing vitiation for earth and sky. Every pair of lungs that inhales pure air also exhales corrupted air, the source of disease. And so rapidly does this process continue that if God had not made provision to abate the evil, there would soon be no more living on this globe than in a close apartment with a charcoal fire. But God in His infinite mercy minimizes man's mischiefs. He sets His great sun as a sentinel to watch for and destroy impurities. He commissions the clear beams of the morning light to chase up poisons and pestilences, to disarm them of their deadly traits, and to lodge them close in grasses and roots and trees, and so to make them useful servants.

And the light illuminates. Darkness no doubt has its uses. I cannot deny that, but representatively it calls up doubt and gloomy terrors. With its shadows and heavy outlines it conjures up all manner of haunting perils. Go down some unfrequented road by night, and how you reason

with yourself to convince yourself that nothing ill can possibly happen. A child would not do so, but would honestly confess that it was afraid. You go because you must, and you are not afraid in the least. O no! And yet the least noise startles you, and here and there fantastic shapes disturb your fancy. Yonder is some grievous beast: you come to it, and it is nothing but a bush. Then, it may be a highwayman. You see him plainly bending over the knoll. Yes, he has a gun, for you see the glint of the light along the barrel. But you know that it cannot be a highwayman, and so you force yourself to go forward, and lo, it is nothing more than a stump with a smooth stick across it. But not only does night alter things that are innocent into suggestions of danger, but it also multiplies the sources of real danger. If there be a pitfall in the path, a broken plank on the bridge, a real wild beast in the thicket, or an actual robber lurking behind the stump, the night covers the peril from sight and prevision. All this the day corrects. It restores the sense of security in the presence of realities. It reveals all the danger that there is. It scatters all the terrors that are merely imaginary. It brings out the real proportions and relations of objects so that they seem as they are, and stand forth in the shape of undisguised reality.

In all this the light is fairly illustrative of the divine truth, which though silent is mighty, which acts as the purifier of thought, and which needs only to rise to its full glory to scatter the doubts and mistakes of human hearts, and bring them to a clear view of their real relations to each other,

and to God. And so we cease to wonder that the divine power in manifesting itself to the human consciousness is attended with light. God speaks to Moses, and we observe that it is from the flame of fire out of the midst of the bush. God leads His people in the desert, and the symbol of His presence is the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. That He abode in the Sanctuary of His people was indicated by that mysterious Shekinah, that beam of light in the Holy of Holies, which fell upon the Ark of the Covenant and flooded it with glory. When the Temple was completed, the Lord gave token of His acceptance of the place, and of the sacrifice, by the fire which came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifice. And so we come by the most natural association of ideas to link together the thought of light and religious influence. And because of this, John speaks of the Father, the Author of all religion, saying, "*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.*" And so the Messiah, the Desire of all nations, who brings life and immortality to light through the Gospel, is revealed to us as "*the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*"

Accordingly it becomes very clear when our Lord bids us to let our light shine, that He is directing us to use to its best advantage whatever religious light and knowledge we possess.

Further still, in the admonition, "*Let your light shine,*" we may read implication that man is in stewardship of the light which he has; that he does not hold it in original possession, to do with it as may best please himself. Rather than this,



he is to turn it to the best uses, and afterward give full account of his dealing.

Here enters consideration of no small moment as regards moral obligation. Settle it that a man has absolute ownership in anything, and you create one class of responsibility. A man owns his house in fee simple. Then he can do with it in general whatever he pleases. He can build on an addition, or he can tear the whole thing down. He can enlarge the window spaces, or he can board up the windows and live by artificial light. He can sell his house, or give it away for a nominal consideration. And he can do all this because it is his very own. But suppose another case: that his ownership is merely leasehold, or that he hires it by the month, or else that he is engaged by the owner to take care of it while the man to whom it belongs has gone away on a journey, and in each of these instances you have an altogether different kind of responsibility. Now the property must be protected. The tenant can do as he pleases only so far as he pleases to guard the interests of the owner. In due time he must turn over the property in good condition. And all the time that it is in his control he can make use of it only according to the general wishes of the real owner.

The context suggests that something like this latter class of responsibility is concerned in our stewardship of the moral and religious truth which we possess.

The light, as you may remark from the verses which precede the text, is that of the candle, a borrowed light. For you may make the very best candle or lamp in the world, and yet it can never

light itself. You know that the ancient Romans, from want of our modern inventions, kept up their fires as a religious service. If the fire on any domestic hearth gave out, fresh fire could be had from the temple of Vesta, where the flame on the altar and on the lamps above the shrine was never suffered to die out from one year's end to another. I can well imagine that these eternal fires were kept going largely from necessity, and that had these same Romans been presented with a cargo of friction matches, and taught how to utilize them, that the Vestal virgins would have lost their occupation many centuries sooner. But even now as then, our domestic light is borrowed. We must bring flame to make flame. We strike the match to light the candle or the gas. And possibly this thought of the light as borrowed will have greater weight, when we reflect that all the material for creating it comes at second hand. What are our present sources of light? Briefly they are the coal deposits, or the fats and oils, whether of vegetable, or animal, or mineral origin. The charming glow of the electric film is no exception to the general rule, for here we have to depend on the consumption of coal, or upon the flow of great streams, for the production of our electric energy. But those waters of the great streams were carried up into the sky by the power of the sun, which smote the sea, and made vapor of the water which rose to the sky to distil in the rains that made the brooks and the rivers. And the great coal deposits, and the fats and oils are all the product of the sunlight. The tallow of the candle, before it was found in the beef creature, was in the sweet grasses of the

pasture and in the waving corn. The rock oils poured out from the coal beds, as well as the coal measures themselves, were deposited ages on ages back by the subtle force of the sun in action on living plants. And so these oils and coals appear to be the sunlight of prehistoric ages, which God has bottled up and presented to this age, and to the ages which are still to come.

And accordingly the simile of the candle intimates that this light of ours, which we are to let shine, is not our own, but comes to us from without, and so we are to employ it under the direction of the higher Power which has given it to us in trust.

Consider for a moment the sources of our moral and mental light, and observe how this obligation becomes more evident. As children of God we enjoy a high degree of intelligence, in which it is common for men to take a pardonable pride. But you may have observed with this attribute of mind, that ordinarily men feel, if there is anything in the world that is indisputably their very own, with which no one else can be permitted to interfere, which they can employ without let or hindrance, it is their mind—themselves. To whom shall they give account for their mental processes, which are known only to themselves and to God? Even if they are given over to loose methods of reasoning, and to hasty judgments, what of that? Is not every man his own master? Must he not do his thinking for himself, and do it in his own fashion?

But after all there is a limit to the man's self-ownership. This mind of mine, with which I do

my thinking; by which I perceive, by which I remember, by which I draw conclusions, is not a native possession, not an original acquisition, but a candle which has been lighted at the altar of God. It is a spark kindled into flame by the omnipotent word, which created the first beam of light, and which made Adam a living soul.

I survey all these forms of animate creation that pass in review before us, and discover that in much the lower creatures have the advantage over us. No man can follow a trail in the forest or the desert with the certainty of his dog. No man can spring many times his length with the sprightliness of the cricket. No man can uproot the palm tree with the ease shown by the elephant. No man can swing himself along the upper branches of the tropical forest with the marmoset or the chimpanzee.

But, and here lies the impassable gulf for all the lower forms of created life, man has mind, intelligence, soul, moral impulse. The animal, even the most capable of them all, does not share these high attributes. He has no part or lot in this matter. It is mind and soul that make man. But whence comes this wonderful gift? Whence but from God, who gives every good and perfect gift; from God, who made man in His own likeness, and whom He calls His child?

But this mental and spiritual endowment of man, which comes by the gift of God, carries with it the power to conceive ideas, and to feel intuitions, which speak with the voice of eternal righteousness; and the further power also to gain other truth, to collect stores of knowledge and correlate

them with other and advancing forms of truth. But from the fact that in winning all this advancing knowledge he must toil much and often to the point of weariness, he is sometimes betrayed into imagining that what he gains in this manner is his own, and that he is himself the sole architect of his mental progress. Let the weary toil be granted, the long preparation, the tedious tutelage with books and masters, the midnight hours spent in solving problems and classifying knowledge. There was deep burrowing into philosophy, and science, and the records of classic literature and art. And there was decided improvement of the man as he absorbed erudition at every pore, till he became a marvel of learning, a veritable walking cyclopedia.

But for all that shall he plume himself on having attained all this by himself alone? But who opened the path for him to engage in these studious pursuits? Who leveled the obstacles and removed them from his path? Who raised up friends to cheer and comfort him? Who gave him the capacity to retain all these knowledges in his mind, and not to have them swept away, as the receding wave scours clean the sandy beach?

As I survey these matters, it seems to me that learning should cultivate modesty rather than pride, and that he who grasps in the greatest extent the knowledges of the world must recognize the good gifts of God, and his own dependence on what the Father is providing for him day by day.

If this conclusion be sound in application to secular learning, how much more is to be so

regarded when we approach the subject of the Gospel? For here we have light, which if it come at all, must come from God. For there is a sense in which we cannot say that the Gospel can be acquired as we master the sciences. Algebra and chemistry and logic can be taught by the professor. Or the diligent student with the help of text-books and laboratory work can acquire them tediously by himself. But while you can work out the differential calculus at the blackboard, you must study religious science on your knees. Unless Christ discloses His Gospel to the soul the teacher will teach, and the preacher will preach in vain.

For it is possible for a man to know all the history and all the facts of the New Testament, and not know the Gospel at all. He may have read all the lives of Christ, Andrews, and Geikie, and Farrar, and Edersheim, and Salter and the rest, and may have compared them diligently with the four evangelists, and while his head may be full of information, his heart may be barren of grace. There can be no doubt of this when we remember that there have been unfortunate preachers, who have taken up preaching as a trade, who have studied the art in the Divinity School, and have been let loose to preach, and have been preaching for years without having known the secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear Him. It is possible, strange as it may appear, for souls to have been converted under the preaching of preachers who have never been converted themselves.

And this can be so, because the Gospel comes to the soul by revelation. This is the meaning of

Paul when he says, "*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" To be seen in its beauty the Gospel must be illumined by the Spirit of God, which floods the simple history with a blaze of heavenly glory. So Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ by the revelation of God. Others knew the main facts about Jesus, His birth, His miracles, His teaching, His gentle character, quite as well as Peter, but God opened Peter's soul to comprehend the relations of these facts with each other, and with the word of prophecy, and so Christ said to him, "*Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*"

And so continually that scene outside the Damascus gate is repeated. The blaze of the noon-day sun may be wanting; the oriental garb may be wanting; the voice of the thunder may be wanting; but for all that many a man who has been possessed of the Saul spirit, a persecutor, a mocker, profane and blasphemous, even though he has known the Gospel as history from his youth up, finds a light in his pathway. Christ comes to him, and he discovers that the Jesus whom he persecutes is the Lord of glory. And so he is born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Blessed that transformation, which gives a man the divine life and the divine sympathies, and opens to him the joy and comfort of the faith. And when this delight comes to any man's soul through the gift of God, he is bound all the

more not to conceal the light, but to let it shine forth for the good of his fellows.

*"Let your light so shine that men may see your good works."* Here is exhortation to active endeavor for goodness. That religion of pure negations, the gist of which consists in the resolve not to harm one's neighbor, and not to violate the precepts of the moral law, is far below the level of Christ's word and example. The text of course is at odds with the pursuit merely of personal aims where the honor of the Master is involved. Often men heap up riches with small regard to the righteousness of their transactions. They cherish lofty ambitions without regard to the consequences which may result from their inordinate endeavors. The place from which the Lord uttered the language of the text offers apt illustration. Just below where Jesus was standing when He said, *"Blessed are the peacemakers,"* and *"Let your light shine,"* in that lovely plain of Jezreel, was fought one of the most sanguinary battles of history. There Napoleon who had conquered Europe sought to tread in the footsteps of Alexander and bring all Asia to his feet. In this battle, with an inferior force, he cut to pieces a Turkish army that outnumbered him eight to one. What shall we say of this man, mighty warrior that he was? He was a master of military strategy and a genius in the combinations of statecraft, but in it all he was devoured by the cravings of a restless ambition, which pressed to its goal regardless of laws, of treaties, or of human rights. Men marvelled at the greatness of his acts, but the good works which manifest the righteous man they looked for



in vain. And so all Europe combined against him, and when the sun went down over the Battle of Waterloo, and nation after nation came to know that the star of this man of destiny had finally set, there went up from the great capitals thanksgivings to God, who had placed a bound to the cravings of a false ambition. No. God's purpose in bestowing the light of great talents, or of Gospel knowledge, is to benefit mankind. Wherever sin has foothold, wherever miseries still linger, wherever souls sit in darkness, there God's children are to come and by the light of their influence and example they are to correct the abuses and to help in saving the world.

In this active influence for righteousness Christ would have His servants hold up the light of their religious profession with determination. You may have seen that statue in the harbor of New York which offers welcome to the stranger who comes to us from over the seas. The pose of that bronze figure is admirable. Liberty holds up her gigantic electric torch as if in truth she were enlightening the nations. It is a lesson for discipleship. The true faith must not be hid. It is a blessing. Hold it up so that all may behold. If you love God never hide that blessed experience. Let your light shine!

And this light of grace should shine without intermission. Your sailors on the great deep expect that the lights that flash out from the headlands all along the coast shall blaze three hundred and sixty-five nights in the year. It is the law of the land that at sunset every lighthouse shall send out its cheerful gleam, and the lamps must be so

trimmed and tended that they shall burn till the break of dawn. There, too, is an example for the Christian. If on the coast, the extinguishing of one beacon might mislead a ship and cause wreckage and loss of life, and so even the temporary lowering of the Christian's light may lead to the loss of souls. For it is a fact which we cannot escape that soul depends upon soul. Constancy is helped to be more constant by constancy. All Christian influence is based upon sincerity, and every Christian who turns his light low loses credit for sincerity, and his influence wanes correspondingly.

And the Christian is expected to let his light shine in the church, and in the gatherings for social worship, and in all his life and labor. There are pleasant gatherings in the social world. People whose perceptions are none too clear frequently speak carelessly of matters which they do not understand. Shall the Christian, when his faith is assailed sit in bashful silence? Never! Let him confess Christ in evil as well as in good report. Let your light shine!

There are pleasant parlors where gay friends congregate and where they engage in diversions which they hardly expect good Christians to assist them in; but they will accept such assistance nevertheless, even if in their hearts they are sneering all the time at that stripe of Christians. But is the Christian to sink his Christianity because he is outside of his church? Shall he turn his light low because the world has a candle of its own? There is a more excellent way. Let him leave all questionable diversions to others. He

never knows how much more his faith is respected when men see it as a guide of life, and not as a mere makeshift. Let him let his light shine!

Some young Christian when on a journey has an invitation to a barroom. Some friend is there, or a fellow student, whom he may meet there by simply waiting. With little thought he enters the place. What harm can there be in that? He takes no glass. He does not patronize the place. But all the same it is no place for a Christian. It is in such surroundings that all Christian ideals are assailed and shattered. It is the rendezvous for the inveterate enemies of truth and righteousness. It is the veritable vestibule of hell. No Christian can cross that threshold without turning his light down. Let him stand as a rock against the saloon and all its accessories. Let your light shine!

It is the Christian who is in dead earnest whose life tells on all that is about him. Some time back an infidel, widely known for the bitterness with which he had fought the faith, became a Christian. What wrought the change? "One argument," said he, "I could never meet, and that was the consistent life of my father." A man like that, whose good works led his wayward son to glorify God was blessed. Blessed the young Christian, or the older Christian, who walks daily in the light and lets his light shine. Some soul somewhere will see it and be the better for it, and the aggregate of good growing out of a life consecrated like that shall never be known till the ages of eternity welcome us, and the books of God unfold to our wondering vision.



## FAITH'S IMPULSE TO MERCY



## X.

### FAITH'S IMPULSE TO MERCY

LUKE 10:33—"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him."

ON the sea when the tempest is lashing the waves in fury, the storm-tossed sailor thinks of the solid shore; the wayfarer struggling under the hot sun of the tropics, of the grateful shade, and the planter, toiling in the Springtide with plowing and planting, of the harvest that is to repay him with its bountiful store. In any period of stress and trial as there drifts over the mind a remembrance of what may be, though it be the merest web spun from the loom of fancy, lighter than gossamer, yet from the thought there comes comfort and refreshment. And by the same token, when the world care grows heavy, and toil has become a treadmill, how cheering the respite of the Sabbath morning, and the solemn calm of the Sanctuary, with its chance to contemplate how things ought to be, which after all is but another name for the way that God wishes them.

And this weekly turning from the cares that are toward the comforts that are to be is the more profitable, since beside the momentary satisfaction

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Defiance College, Ohio, at a union meeting in the Baptist church, February 21, 1915.

to the spirit the thinking of these matters may bring about salutary change. There is much that cannot be measured by a theodolite and the surveyor's chain. Sometimes it is possible to extricate the unfortunate from a difficulty, as the Alpine guides lift the tourist up some rough place by help of a stout rope; but again there are times when a word, a look, a memory, the unseen, imponderable influence of spirit on spirit, may be of more use to a struggling soul than the heaviest cable ever twined. There was Bruce, whom all the schoolboys can tell of; Bruce conquered, demoralized, hiding from his pursuers in a hay-loft, who saw the spider spinning its web, trying to reach the beam and failing, and yet trying again and again till it succeeded. From that sight the king gained more encouragement and real heart lift, than from all the wise words of his counselors.

Bring to the soul some new vision of duty, some higher ideal for its striving, some purer aim for its daily effort, and you beget a fresh miracle. And so for the brief time that we are together what better can we do than to turn from all the problems that you have been troubled with, and from the cares that have kept you wakeful, and consider a good man in his accomplishment of a generous deed.

Must our picture be a description of an actual occurrence? What matters the reality, or the non-reality of the incident, so long as it be true in heart feelings? Must the artist in representing his landscape include every gnarled stump and unsightly object that makes blemish upon the landscape? If his work be true in the main, a faithful



reproduction of nature in her happiest mood, so natural that nature at her sprightliest and kindest might have wrought its counterpart, surely we will not quarrel with him for wreathing his ruin with the ivy that may not have happened to be there, or for suppressing from the foreground some hideous thing, the introduction of which would have marred the general effect. Similarly with this picture of the Good Samaritan, we make no question whether the Lord relates it as an actual happening, or whether He invents it as a parable; whether it be fact or fiction. Altogether apart from that phase of the matter our story stands forth replete with interest and instruction. It is a drama of life which stirs our sluggish pulses and makes us hate and admire, stirring us with two emotions which we need to cultivate, for we are always the better for having a wholesome detestation for wickedness and a hearty admiration for the noble and the true.

And our Lord who tells the story with small attention to rhetorical embellishment presents it in a manner which awakens our keenest interest. He has a purpose, to compel that Jewish lawyer to perceive and confess that the honor of doing one's duty faithfully is worthier than the superficial honors of birth and position. As we analyze the incident we shall observe how Jesus arranges to effect this result.

For the first, He touches the chord of sympathy, which we may believe no heart can be so hard or abandoned as to have completely lost. To rouse our lawyer's sympathy he tells of a lonely road,

a hill road, the common highway to Jericho, which lay some eighteen miles to the east from Jerusalem. This road leading downward to the Jordan valley followed the winding gullies, and was faced with frequently recurring caves, which for generations had been beset by thieves and cut-throats; a road possibly often traversed by His hearer, who may have gone this way with quaking heart, and have praised God for His mercy when he reached home unharmed. On this dangerous route the Lord pictures a solitary traveler, urged to his venture possibly by pressing business that could not tarry for the protection of a regular caravan, or perchance spurred by the reckless audacity which plunges into peril regardless of consequences. But fool-hardiness brings its natural reward. The robbers take advantage of their opportunity. The lonely man suffers the surprise, the hand to hand conflict, the overthrow, the wounding and robbing; and when the cut-throats have completed their work of violence they leave him lying there in the road, bare, bleeding, dying.

To this scene the Lord now introduces two other actors, against whose selfish inhumanity we are made to feel a hot aversion. First comes the holy priest, a man set apart to do God's will, and to be representative of God's honor and mercy. It is part of his business to assist the distressed, and as chance offers to alleviate the burden of human misery. In this affair his duty is plain. The law makes no exemption for clergy or laity when trouble lifts her piteous plea. Immediately the needy are to be succored, the unfortunate to be

relieved. And the heart should go with the hand, for it adds materially to the value of the gift. So Lowell sings,

He who gives a slender mite,  
And gives to that which is out of sight,  
That thread of the all-sustaining beauty,  
Which runs through all, and doth all unite;  
The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms;  
The heart outstretches its eager palms;  
For a God goes with it and makes it store  
To the soul that was starving in darkness before.

But even if the heart were far away, with that man lying in the road, his life ebbing away, under the law it was the priest's duty to lift him and comfort him. Why, under Moses' law, whoever found a beast astray was to restore him to his owner; or if he were fallen into a pit, he was required to extricate him, though it might be on the Sabbath day. How much more then should this priest assist this man, a compatriot, a brother Jew and one of his own nation. Surely he will hear the man's moans. As a priest he will show mercy. He will do all that duty requires, and even more. But sad to say, the priest disappoints us. It is not always that priests and ministers are immaculate. He does not approach that prostrate form. Possibly he quiets his conscience by the plea of other and pressing duties. The service of the Temple may demand his speedy coming. So he does not stop to give the sufferer a draught of water. He passes by, leaving the victim of violence to perish. And so far as he was concerned the man might have perished. If the occurrence were fact, and who can say that it was not; if that

priest in his coldness and hardness of heart actually went past, not caring whether the poor man lived or died, then in the judgment the case must rise against him, precisely as if the man had suffered to the uttermost.

Another now approaches, a Levite, an official connected with the Temple service, though in a grade subordinate to that of the priest. Doubtless the Levite will succor the needy and helpless, for this was one of his specific duties. He cannot plead excuse on the ground of other obligations, because his was the more secular office: the care of the Temple, the oversight of the poor, the doing works of charity and mercy. As he approaches he comes nearer than the priest. Does his heart swell with heavenly pity? Does he prove himself a man of generous impulses? Does he lift that aching head? Does he stanch those dripping wounds? Not so. He too goes past. He has forgotten his office of compassion. Stony hearted Levite! We are no better pleased with him than with the miserable pretense of a priest, whom we have already put under condemnation.

So far in this narrative the Lord has stirred our lawyer's better nature to feel active sympathy for misfortune and to aversion for cold-blooded selfishness. Now He goes on to elicit the sentiment of admiration. He describes the coming of another man on this lonely way, one who happens to be a Samaritan, a man of the race that the Jew hated, and with whom he would have no dealings; one whom he would commonly speak of as a dog, or a swine. What could a Jew expect of a Samaritan, especially in any matter in which another Jew was

concerned? He was not supposed to possess any of the kindlier feelings. And then, too, he had behind him generations of Jewish abuse and villification, which he would naturally resent. This Samaritan will probably pass by, glad in his heart that one more Jew is suffering as he deserves.

But what is this that we see? The Samaritan checks his beast; he dismounts; he washes away tenderly the grime and the stain; he anoints every cut and bruise and binds them up; he lifts the sufferer to his saddle, and half carrying holds him there till he comes to a public house. Then as his business is urgent he leaves the sufferer with the landlord, after paying his board in advance, and he pledges himself if there are any extra expenses to meet the bill when he comes on his return. The Samaritan to our surprise has acquitted himself like a man. He is humane, generous, noble. Though a Samaritan, child of a race that Jerusalem hates and despises, he has so won the good will of the lawyer, that when Jesus asks him, "*Which of the three thinkest thou was neighbor to him that fell among the thieves?*" he is constrained to reply, "*He that showed mercy upon him.*" You see that he could not quite brace himself up to say, "The Samaritan." The old Jewish prejudice that he had imbibed with his mother's milk was in the way of that. But what he said amounted to much the same. For when he said, "*He that showed mercy,*" he was commending the Samaritan as better worthy of regard than the priest and the Levite. Though they were of his own people, he must have been thoroughly ashamed of them both.

And the ages approve this judgment. Wherever this tale is told there is but one conclusion about it. Everywhere and always "*He that showed mercy*" is known and honored as the Good Samaritan.

The answer made by the lawyer has a wide bearing. It carries with it a preparation for the Gospel, which always confronts and confounds the spirit of caste and prejudice. That was a lesson which the time of our Lord required. Never in the world was the pride of birthright assumed with haughtier carriage. Every Jew was a student of the genealogical tables and kept his pedigree with a sedulous care that no German princeling with his thirty-two quarterings of nobility ever exceeded. Be his condition what it might, though he were as poor as Lazarus, and as helpless as the paralytic whom it took four to carry into the presence of the Master, he was a stickler for the blue blood of Abraham and all the privileges which that descent conferred. To be one of the Chosen People, this was a prouder boast than to be heir of Croesus, or a son of the Caesar. And yet we note how this Jewish lawyer, who cherished this same pride of race, was brought to confess that a Samaritan, whom every Jew despised, was a better and a truer man than either the priest or the Levite, with all their well-attested tables of unexceptionable descent.

The lesson has wide application. It signifies that in God's sight true manhood, nobility of character and conduct, outweigh all incidental conditions and positions. It opposes all those artificial distinctions and barriers which the world has been

creating in order to separate rank from rank and class from class.

Society has long been setting up arbitrary standards of conduct for the apparent purpose of exalting the few and shutting out the many. It formulates new laws of social observance. It must talk with just such an intonation, now with a drawl, or a peculiar inflection, or a mispronunciation of certain words for which there is no authority anywhere save in its own temporary caprice. It must carry the body with such a strut, or such a bend, eat this sort of food with the fork, and that sort with a spoon, and the other sort with the fingers, and show this kind of jewelry this season and another kind next season. All this is of no concern to the people who are not in that particular set, except when as is so often the case a malicious spirit attends all these differentiations, and trains itself to despise honest folk who have something else to do beside chasing after the latest style of visiting card, and the rest of it.

Or the worldly mind sets up a standard of social recognition that is based on wealth. Its criterion of judgment is the tax list, and the god it worships is the Indian that the government stamps and prints on its coins and bills.

And with all this society builds up an idle class, whose pride is that of the sparrow which does not toil or spin, while common people have to get up early and sit up late to earn their living. It is a fortunate experience for any one to be free from the anxiety for the morrow. And such may be very noble, especially if they receive their bounty as good stewards of God, and employ it with rea-

sonable sense of their obligation. But when good fortune is taken as one's rightful due, when it induces disdain of those who are less highly favored, when it causes a sneer in the voice when one talks of "the working class," then it is high time to look at these things as they appear to God. And the good God I am sure does not care for any of our petty distinctions. It is the man himself that God notices and not his clothes. The meanest sneak in the town can wear fine clothes and in the latest fashion, if he can only get some foolish tailor to trust him. Nor does God care for a man's possessions, for poverty of cash goes often with opulence of soul. Nor does God respect a man because of his ancestry. For what is a noble ancestry after all but a reproach, unless the descendant keeps up to the standard of his fathers? What is it else than a burning shame when the last representative of a noble line has dwindled down into baseness or good-for-nothingness? Those weak and puny sprigs of noble houses, who have nothing in themselves to recommend them, and yet are so preposterously proud of their pedigree, have been aptly compared to the turnip, the best part of which is under the ground. Durand was one of Napoleon's great marshals. He was a child of the people and rose from nothing to high rank by sheer force of his personal courage and power. One day he was in a company of officers, several of whom were boasting of their great ancestors, when he spoke up saying, "*I am an ancestor myself*," which was surely the greater distinction. It was in his own personal worth that the Good Samaritan achieves



commendation. The priest and the Levite paid too much attention to incidentals. But the Samaritan cultivated goodness of heart and was so square a man that he won the Lord's blessing.

But there is another point of view from which all these adventitious circumstances are to be considered. If a man is not worthy in himself of his family, or of his fortune, there is large chance of his advantages becoming stumbling-blocks to his feet and millstones about his neck. Many a poor fellow, who has too lofty a position, who has had a too gentle grade of birth, who has had too ample an income, and so has gone all wrong, might have amounted to something worth while had he been born to struggle and poverty and been compelled to make his own way. Advantages are of no avail unless they are made good use of. It was no harm to Ralph Waldo Emerson that he had behind him sixteen generations of Gospel ministers, of whom he was lineally descended. But he did not depend on his ancestry and made good for himself. And this is what all should be doing, for to depend on advantages merely is to throw away opportunity. The Scripture is overflowing with examples to prove the rule. There is the Hebrew race, which in the pride of its Law and Covenant, rejects Jesus. What a history that race enjoyed, and what a record of divine establishment and divine interventions. God had called Abraham, the Father of the faithful. He had led Israel out of bondage with a high and outstretched arm. He had given them a glorious land, and granted them a long and eventful series of mercies, which showed that He held them with peculiar favor.

What might not a historical heritage like that have wrought for their race had they followed God with the trust that their fathers had shown? But they were content to depend on the achievements of their fathers. They trusted in Moses, but they would not put their trust in Jesus Christ. And so Christ threw open the door of His Kingdom to the Gentiles.

The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican carries the like thought. As the two men come to the Temple the advantage seems to all with the Pharisee. He is respectable: the other is not. He has been religious: the other has not. He has kept the fasts: the other has not. The Publican is so conscious of his errors that he dares not lift his eyes as he enters the holy place. But the advantages of the Pharisee are his destruction; for he trusts to them, while the Publican trusts in God and is justified.

The present lesson has the same ethical bearing. Here are the priest and the Levite, both of them engaged in the Temple worship; both God's ministers, in comparison with whom the Samaritan must have seemed a very vulgar and worthless person. But so used had they grown to the atmosphere of piety that they made it a careless formality. The nearer they seemed to God the farther they were away. Perhaps had they not had so much to make them good and true they might have been better and truer men.

And so I am asking if there are any in this place who have enjoyed great opportunities for goodness, and are lacking in that personal goodness which the Lord requires. Is there some one who

has had a Christian father and mother, and has Christian brothers and sisters, who has been thus living in an atmosphere surcharged with Christian goodness, and who in spite of all this is wanting in the personal religious life? God wants each one's soul offering. No prayers of your pious father can be a substitute for yours. Think of this priest and this Levite, and let their case give warning against imagining that the warmth of the religious atmosphere in which you are privileged to live can in any way release from the obligation of personal faith in the Son of God.

*"When he saw him he had compassion on him."* The mark of the Good Samaritan was his having compassion. This spirit of love and mercy is characteristic of Christianity and of true Christians. In various secret orders the membership is recognized as having undergone certain exercises of initiation. Similarly the growth into mercy is initiation into Christian living. We have ample opportunity for showing mercy. No need to travel across the seas, or to go down the hill road towards Jericho, to find cases that call for sympathy. There is a spirit that wants distance to lend enchantment to the view before it can listen to the voice of duty. It will send stew pans to the cannibals, but overlooks the weak and wounded lying at its door. It sets its eye on Terra del Fuego or the North Pole, but has no glance for the home-spun and commonplace sorrow. But the earnest Christian who says, "God bless the foreign field," is just as ready to say, "God bless the home field." He does not carry his head so high while listening for distant woes that he is deaf to the

cry of the man who lies bleeding in the road before him. Yes indeed, pain, wounds, burdens, necessities; these are instant passports to the true man's heart. I suspect that both the priest and the Levite would have extended the helping hand to the sufferer if he had belonged to their set, or if he had been an attendant at their synagogue, or if he had been first cousin to their wife's half sister. But you notice that the distinction of our Good Samaritan is that he had compassion on the man, when his only credentials were his wounds and his pain.

Have you considered that the Samaritan showed compassion by pouring in wine? The Scripture says that he poured in oil and wine. But we are not to jump to the hasty conclusion that this is to be taken as a back-handed blow at the temperance movement. It is not to be taken in that way at all. It makes all the difference in the world how one uses the wine. The Good Samaritan mixed his with oil, olive oil. I would care little how much in the way of intoxicants might be imported into the state if I were permitted to mix them to suit me. I would make the composition about half liquor and half oil, and to make the business satisfactory I would make the half part of oil to be good, cold-pressed castor-oil. That would make a very harmless preparation. But there is quite a difference in the way one uses the wine and the rest of it. In the Savior's day good wine and good olive oil were beaten together, and were then employed as an unguent for wounds. The Good Samaritan poured his wine *outside the man*. It would be a good thing now to pour all the wine, and all the

rum, and all the beer outside of men—the gutter would be a good place—and then the world would be happier, and the hand of violence would be lighter, and the outrage of sin would be less grievous, and a brighter day would dawn upon all our counsels and enterprises.

But Christ's Samaritans remember that there are other wounds than those of sword and club and spear. The tongue is a sharp weapon, and it cuts keener than a razor, and deeper than a dagger. O that men and women could realize the power and menace of the tongue. There are sufferers from the sin of slander, who have done nothing to be slandered for. There are penitent sinners, who have sinned and have paid the full penalty of their sinning, and are doing their best to win once more the confidence of their fellows. How are these to be dealt with? Some come like the priest and the Levite and carelessly pass by on the other side. But some do not pass by. Well would it be for the troubled soul if they would pass by. But no, they pause, they inspect, they probe, they agonize. The Samaritan soothed the victim of the robbers with oil and wine. These handle the wound. They tear away the bandages. They pour in seething, scathing oil of vitriol. Heaven restrain the people who are at their best when they are setting their neighbors by the ears, and who in place of healing the pains of the world aggravate and make them worse by their malicious gossip. But the Good Samaritan is a child of peace. He is the true neighbor who in every trial comes with the hand of compassion and in all his showing shows mercy.

But our present lesson would be incomplete if we fail to observe *the* Good Samaritan. The good man was merciful, but where are such depths of mercy known or imagined as appear in the life and character of Jesus? All wounded with sin, what claim had man to the favor of heaven? And yet Christ came to his relief. He makes no questions about the past, about one's race, or family, or position, or wealth. All that Jesus asks is, Is this man in need?

And what love there was in the Savior's helping. The man took the sufferer to an inn: Christ lifts us in the arms of eternal mercy.

The man paid two days' wages, the sufferer's board for two weeks, but Christ poured out His own precious blood.

The man went away, but Jesus remains and watches beside us through the long night hours of sin's fitful fever, and through the long days of temptation and struggle. When once Christ takes a wounded heart to heal, He never leaves it, He never forsakes it, He never forgets it. Bless His holy name forever and forever.

I have three very brief applications.

1. Never expect too much of the world. Perfection is blessed, but perfection means heaven, and heaven is yet a great way off. Never take it for granted that professors of religion or even ministers of the Gospel must be infallible. We hoped much from the priest and the Levite, but they disappointed our expectation. In the hour of need they went by on the other side.

2. When trouble comes we are not to give way to despair, but should keep an open eye for coming

comfort. That wounded man in the road had a hard time of it, and it must have seemed as if there were no use in trying to live when two men who should have extended help went past one after the other. O how hard was that road, and how hot that blazing sun, and how those wounds racked and burned! But all the while the Samaritan was coming, was mounting his beast, was trotting along the road, three miles off, two miles, half a mile, and then there he was, lifting up, comforting, saving. With the first blow that smites you, remember that God is raising up some messenger of relief. Trust Him and wait His time.

3. Seek faith for yourself. Put no trust for your salvation in any position or circumstance in which you may be placed. Never lie back upon the earnestness of your church, upon the religious standing of the college, or upon the piety of your friends. Do not think that you are to be saved even by the faithful prayers of your loving mother. If you lean on these they may hinder you from having faith for yourself. You are right to rejoice in any privileges which God confers upon you, but they all should be made tributary to the strength of your personal faith. Taken in that manner they will not be traps for your feet, but blessings, ladders of grace by which you may mount to higher and more blissful ranges of spiritual attainment.





FAITH EVER DEVELOPING



## XI.

### FAITH EVER DEVELOPING

ST. MATTHEW 9: 17—"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."

MATTHEW, a man of substance, has made a feast to which he invites his neighbors so they may meet the new teacher about whom so many are talking. While they are still at table, presumably arrayed in the best that they have, and in plain sight of wine-skins that have been drained generously for their benefit, Jesus begins to talk about new patches on old garments, and new wine in old wine-skins. So far as it concerned the clothes and the wine-skins that they were looking at, the expression was the simplest possible. The dullest mind could appreciate that mending an old coat with a fresh patch would result in having a vile pucker in the garment; and that storing new wine in an old wine-skin that was already stretched to the limit would simply invite disaster the instant that active fermentation began.

But the Lord's suggestion did not halt at that point. Had the guests at that feast comprehended His language as we do, I suspect that they would have thrust their fingers in their ears and scuttled

home as if to escape the pestilence. That they kept right on eating and drinking while the Lord was pronouncing the doom of their religious faith shows that they saw only the surface of His meaning, and that the profoundly revolutionary significance of His utterance escaped them altogether.

But why was Judaism become already a worn-out fabric, fit only for the dust-bin of forgetfulness? Certainly the system possessed many elements which we must approve, and which were capable of inspiring the thoughtful with veneration.

One of these was the patriotic spirit which it engendered. Wherever the Jew might wander, and in that Augustan age his foot was in every city, there was no spot so favored as to hinder him from longing with all his soul for the land of his fathers. The slopes of Mount Hermon, the plains of Sharon and Esdraelon, the waters of Tiberias and Jordan, and the steep ascent from the Great Sea to Jerusalem, were for him the fairest of the whole earth. And the center of it all, the goal of pious pilgrimage, was Jerusalem, the Holy City. Here was the Temple, and the Holy Altar, which in his farthest wanderings he never forgot, and to which he returned whenever his circumstances would permit. He recalled his national history, when Jerusalem was the City of the Great King. He thought of David, the warrior; and of Solomon the Magnificent, and every fibre of his being yearned for the day when Messiah should come and recover His city and Temple from the defilement of the stranger. To him it was intolerable that his sacred places should be

trodden under foot of the Gentile, and so never a day passed over his head that he failed to lift a prayer for the coming of the Deliverer and the restoration of the national name and power.

And Judaism in its worship was beautiful. The Temple service was a stately ceremonial of song, and incense, and sacrifice. Its home was the great Temple on Zion, a structure renowned throughout the world for its extent and architectural grandeur. Here a devoted priesthood led the prayers of the people according to a magnificent ritual, which in its richness and orderly movement swept the waiting soul along in a rapture of adoration.

And then also it was a venerable worship. It carried with it the hallowed associations of historical remembrance. After these ways the fathers had worshiped for generations. These same beautiful psalms had been chanted by the choirs of David, and the exiles in captivity had repeated their precious promises on bended knees and with streaming eyes. It is no wonder then that the Jew clung to his faith with such ardent affection. Age when it is right has ever a mellowness and a ripeness which gives it a delightful charm. An old man whose years have brought him experience and wisdom, and yet left his soul bright and cheery; who has won strength from his many struggles, and the good judgment that saves him from being worrisome and querulous; who has the clear vision to see the good about him and the good sense to admit that it exists—how we venerate him! Such sweet peace looks out of his placid eyes, such calm dignity crowns his whitening hairs that we are all anxious to do him a service.

And we feel something of the same respect for an old church; not the tumbledown barn which some communities consider good enough for God, but the church which was built long ago with loving sacrifice, and that has been maintained in the like spirit, so that while time has robbed it of its newness and mellowed down the glare of color into a harmonious blending of pleasing tones, it has also filled it with holy recollections. The moment one steps inside a church like that irreverence hushes its voice to a whisper, and the devout bend before God in the rapture of worship.

And something like that goes along with an ancient faith, when it represents the truth of God's care of His people and their dependence on Him. The passing years mantle it with dignity and sublimity. So nineteen centuries have crowned the faith that we love. Give me no new Gospel that was invented yesterday; no brand-new cultus that has revelations made to order, as one gets a new coat from his tailor! The faith that brings us inexpressible peace is the faith once delivered unto the saints, that stayed a Paul in his trials, that comforted a Peter in his prison cell, and that age after age has proven itself the refuge and solace of the trustful Christian heart. Up to this hour, the convert, the mourner, the dying, say with common voice,

Faith of our fathers, holy faith,  
We will be true to thee till death.

Now when we think of our faith in such a manner it is not difficult for us to conceive how earnest souls in the time of Jesus, who were born

under Judaism, who never knew any other worship, must have felt toward the religion in which they placed all their trust. To them it was the very truth, and so far as they could know, it was all the truth. And accordingly we understand and commend the simple piety of Mary of Nazareth, and of her cousin Elizabeth; the consecrated devotion of Zacharias, and the intensity of desire in the soul of Simeon for one sight of the Lord's anointed.

But with all that might be said in favor of Judaism, we note that the Lord pronounced its condemnation and that in effect He declares, however serviceable the old Law had been in the past, its doom had struck and it must give place to the coming Gospel.

The reason for the displacement of Judaism lay in the fact that it had in the course of generations developed a set of cramping limitations.

One of these was the emphasis it laid upon its local habitation. That woman of Samaria, with whom Jesus spoke by the well, struck this characteristic of the Jew when she said, "*Our fathers worshiped in this mountain (Gerizim), and ye say that in Jerusalem men ought to worship.*" Judaism sought to bind the true faith to the Holy Land, a little strip of the earth hardly larger than the state of Massachusetts, and would limit salvation exclusively to the sons of Abraham. That notion of binding God's right worship to the members of a single race, while God is the Father of all men, in the mere statement moved its condemnation.

But Judaism was limited by its formalism. The purpose of a ritual is to make the expression of worship simple and easy, and so to aid the soul in its uplift toward God. When the multitude is praying it is easier for everybody to pray. The processional, the sacrifice, the swinging of censers tossing out clouds of incense, all tend to render worship more free and unrestrained. But Judaism had perverted this better use of worship, and had turned all these aids to devotion into rigid fetters of a cast-iron usage. Just such prayers and no other, and in just such postures! Larger phylacteries, and broader borders to the garments of worship! Such and such fasts, and just so often! In this manner the ritual of worship, in place of promoting the spiritual life, was crushing it out by its ever-increasing burden of needless requirements.

And there was another limitation, which is closely related to ritualism, that of custom and tradition. The rabbis had invented a number of minor sins, with the worthy purpose of making real sin more difficult to commit, on the theory that the man who committed some of the minor sins, and so fell under moral and social condemnation, would still be a long way from committing any very offensive sin. Such was the philosophy of the "hedge about the law." But we have in mind the practical effect of this "hedge," and the fact is that the multiplication of these arbitrary prohibitions established by the rabbis ultimately constituted a spiritual tyranny over all life, religious, social, secular, domestic, and personal. There was a set fashion respecting food, a set fashion for



bathing, a set fashion of walking; for a common day, such a distance, and for a holy day, so much the less. And all these fashions were so much worse than anything that we know by that name, because the tyrant that was dominating all their affairs was religion, and because the man who would not submit to this kind of dictation was not merely an unfashionable person, a social boor; but more, he was pronounced a sinner, and was thrust out from religious fellowship. And that was why Jesus uttered that stinging indictment of the Pharisees when he declared that they were making the law of God of none effect by their traditions.

Still another limitation of Judaism, which was nullifying its better influences, grew out of its age and the tendency that goes with age to collect much that is vain and worthless. All life while it is developing gives chances for progress, but also gives equal chances for waste. In a way it may be said of living that it is constantly dying. In this human body, which is so fearfully and wonderfully made, along with the assimilation of food goes the making of new blood discs, those beautiful carriers of gases in the arteries and veins. All the time new blood discs are making, but with every throb of the heart thousands of the older ones are dying. Ride up and down the valleys of Pennsylvania, where they are making iron and steel, and about every blast furnace you will see mountains of waste material, the slag from the smelting furnaces, on which not even grass will grow. Travel past these by night and you will see an iron car laden with the molten stone, with flames playing all over its surface moving along

to the dump, and the glaring lights will be fetching out in Rembrandt effects the forms of the men who push it to the place where the waste is to be cast out to cumber the ground. In similar manner there has to be waste in moral forces and movements; an assimilation of new material, and a casting away of the outworn which the new replaces. Each generation has its own religious problems, and its own religious expressions and emphasis in meeting them. These it assumes like a useful garment, which after all that can be said is useful only while it is capable of meeting the present need. All these religious expressions and interpretations with the lapse of time, like the garment, will be getting woefully out at the elbow. And yet there are some who will never be able to comprehend this simple principle, and who when religious formulas and expressions have come to the end of their usefulness will cling to them with superstitious reverence. And Judaism was full of such antiquated notions and expressions, which the rabbis continued to hold, and which they exalted into a position of prime importance at the expense of sincerity of faith. It was no idle charge of Jesus when He accused them of tithing mint, anise, and cummin, the insignificant herbs of the kitchen garden, and of neglecting the weightier matters of the law, such as judgment, mercy, and truth.

But the tale of the indictment is not yet complete, for there is the matter of selfish interest left to be reckoned with, a trait which is prominent in every age. For there were some to whom Judaism was a business affair, the source of their

livelihood. There was the priest, and the rabbi, and the merchant who sold doves or neat cattle for the sacrifices, and the money changers who took commission for changing foreign coin into the Jewish half shekel of silver, which was the legal tender for the temple tax required of the worshiper; and all of these, priest, rabbi, merchant, and money-changer resisted with all his power any alteration from the old way, any change that would cut down his income from the dove selling, or the cattle selling, or the money-changing. It was just that way in Ephesus when Paul came and preached the Gospel. For Demetrius, who was a silversmith and made his living by making silver models of the temple of Diana, which he sold to strangers, stirred up his fellow silversmiths to create a riot in the marketplace against this Paul who was ruining his business. And so in Jerusalem the passion of self-interest set the priests and elders and merchants into a league to suppress this Jesus, who was introducing a new impulse, a spiritual impulse, into their national and religious life. That was why they would not listen to Him at all. Their religion was hidebound and offered no room for natural and legitimate progress. Clinging to the dead past, besotted with pride and prejudice it stood in line of battle against the truth. The voice of heaven appealed to them, but they thrust their fingers into their ears. The purest sayings ever uttered they branded as lies from the bottomless pit. All the tender sympathy of the Master they scorned and made mock of. The more He loved them the worse they hated Him, and the more they

conspired together to effect His murder. That is the case against Judaism, that the Lord offered them life and that they rejected Him. When it was evident that Judaism had no room for new truth, or for old truth stated in a new way, it was already dead. No use, the Lord would say, to bother longer with that. No profit to pour the new wine of the kingdom into that old, battered and shrunken wine-skin. Away with the old and worthless, so as to make room for a live Gospel instinct with power that would be able to reach men.

Now the glory of Jesus Christ, and of the Christian faith is this, that where Judaism was narrow and a failure, Christianity has been broad, and vital and a success from the beginning. From its first declaration the new faith gave assurance that its message was for all humanity. Peter preaches in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. His audience, as appears in the second chapter of Luke's history of the Acts, was composed of Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus, in Asia and all the rest of it. In that enumeration you see that in that single gathering were representatives from every country and race that fronted the Mediterranean Sea. And all those nations and peoples were represented in the three thousand who were added to the church on that historic day. Of course they were all of them Jews or descendants of Jews; but they went their several ways to their homes, and in all those nations they began preaching the Gospel and making converts, with no discrimination or restriction for Jew or Gentile; for

bond or free. It was a new link, this Gospel, which held together all humanity, all who were children of God, the common Father. Later Peter went to Caesarea where he preached in the household of Cornelius. There he boldly says, "*Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.*" Paul preached on Mars Hill in Athens, that center of philosophy and cultivation, and there he proclaimed that "*God hath made of one blood all nations of men;*" and "*that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, though He be not far from every one of us.*"

And so apostle after apostle went forth, traveling into strange lands and everywhere welcoming into the fellowship of Jesus whoever was willing to accept Him. Black men, or white; king, soldier, or slave; rich man or poor, all were one in Christ Jesus. No such unifying force was ever let loose into the world as this Gospel, which melts all hearts, conquers all iniquities, and recreates men in the likeness of their Lord. It won the ancient world in the brief space of three centuries, and now in this modern age it is girding itself afresh for advance into the strongholds of superstition, and to push its campaign until this whole round world shall know and serve the Redeemer.

It is the privilege of students in our institutions of learning to realize that the Christian faith is qualified to make this appeal to all humanity, because it is particularly and profoundly a spiritual faith. It has no restrictions that tie it down to any city, to any race, to any clique, to any institu-

tion, which in the least degree can interfere with its free approach to any soul. Is it said that Jesus was a Jew and that the Gospel in consequence must be Jewish in its tone and sympathy? But it has been noticed that Jesus broke away from Judaism and declared its inefficiency for the best religious uses. And as for Jesus Himself, though He was the son of David, He was also the All-embracing Man; or, as Paul expressed it, the Second Adam, the spiritual progenitor of all regenerate mankind, the Lord from Heaven.

No, in the real Gospel there is the most perfect freedom. Its realm is that of spiritual enlightenment. The profound truths it presents, the Fatherhood of God, the Lordship of Jesus, the present help of God in the heart of every believer, are all independent of times and places and seasons and circumstances, and accordingly are forceful wherever they are properly proclaimed, and are adapted to every clime and to every age.

But Christianity has another triumph in that, while it meets every man, it can also meet him in his uttermost need. There is no situation or condition which can be imagined for a troubled soul for which the Gospel fails to provide an instant and adequate relief. Is it instruction? But in the New Testament are opened up exhaustless treasures of wisdom, which after all these nineteen centuries are unfolding in rich profusion the glorious purposes of the living God. Is it guidance? But the Christian man has the pledge of the Holy Spirit, the divine Comforter, who is to guide him into all truth. Is it guilt? Is it the problem of washing from heart and hand the stain

of evil-doing? But the Gospel provides for that completely in the atoning love of the blessed Savior. Is it light in the dark valley? But we have that also. A saintly man, the late Bishop Cummins, lay dying. Friends surround his couch. At his request the hymn, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," had been sung and he had whispered, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then upon the room silence fell. For a time he lay with eyes closed, as if he had already departed. But suddenly the eyes opened, and a radiance not of earth illumined his countenance, and with joyous exclamation he cried, "Jesus, precious Savior," His wife who relates the incident, and the others who were present, declare that the cry was one of recognition. The passing saint, in the article of death, had beheld his Lord and was comforted.

And so there is not a sentiment of man, which is pure and holy, but that the Gospel blesses it. All the way it is love; Christlike love. And that is its glory.

But we are not to neglect another aspect of the faith, that of its utter self-sacrifice. Whatever the occasion, it asks nothing on its own behalf, while at the same time it is giving its all. This attribute originates with Jesus Himself, who made Himself of no reputation and so offered the supreme sacrifice. And when we are saying this we speak not merely of the end, the crucifixion; but also of the beginning, and of every event of His wonderful sojourn among men. Bethlehem and the manger: sacrifice. The lowly home in Nazareth: sacrifice. Fasting forty days in the wilderness: sacrifice. Weary days of teaching

and preaching to people who would not understand, or did not: sacrifice. Healing the sick and raising the dead, when every such exertion robbed Him of vital power till at times He was on the verge of exhaustion: sacrifice. Weeping with the mourners: more self-giving. And then Pilate's Hall, and the pain of the Sorrowful Way, and that of Calvary: all utter abasement, humiliation, sacrifice. Following that gracious example Christian apostles, martyrs, and all faithful men have been making sacrifice all down the ages. They have consecrated their all upon the altar of their precious faith. What toilsome journeys! What exposures! What perils on the seas, and in strange lands, and among false brethren! They have been doing this all the years, and they will ever be doing it so long as there is sorrow anywhere to be comforted, or a burdened soul to be lifted up. Think of the Pauls and of the Peters and the nameless heroes who carried the banner of the cross to Rome, to Spain, to Britain; of the modern Careys, and Judsons, and Mackays, and Livingstones, and the great host who this very hour, in foreign lands or in the home land, in slums and in prisons, and in the isles of the sea, who are carrying the message, and who mind nothing of toil or privation, if only the faith have its bearing and the Master be glorified.

And please to notice that in all this self-giving they have claimed no return for the faith itself. It was a wonderful saying, that of Paul, when he told the people that he was all things to all men, if by any means he might save some. By that he signified no surrender of principle: he was too



faithful to surrender anything that belonged to his Lord. What he meant was that he arranged to adapt himself to the conditions and thought of the people, and that he made no selfish or arbitrary demands upon them.

Peter wanted the Christians at Antioch to submit to certain Jewish forms and customs, but Paul at once rebuked this formalism of Peter and withstood him to his face.

Jesus declared the spirit of the Gospel when He healed the man on the Sabbath day. When the Jews complained of His action He met them on their own ground by telling them that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. That principle holds for every line of Gospel observance. Everything in the Gospel is for man; nothing for itself. The Gospel gives and it gives to the uttermost. —

The lessons that remain will be of the briefest.

1. It is the privilege of the student to realize that the Gospel offers little room for criticism and condemnation. All that is a survival of an evil past. Criticism and condemnation were prominent in Judaism in the period of her decay. When the Lord of life came with His promises of divine love Judaism hurled itself against Him with hatred and every malevolent accusation. It is a weak cause which busies itself with abuse and the red hand of murder.

2. The student finds in the Gospel a touchstone which enables him to set the right valuation on old faiths. Wherever such are spiritual and alive with energy, and are in accord with the teachings of Jesus, they are worthy. If they make Chris-

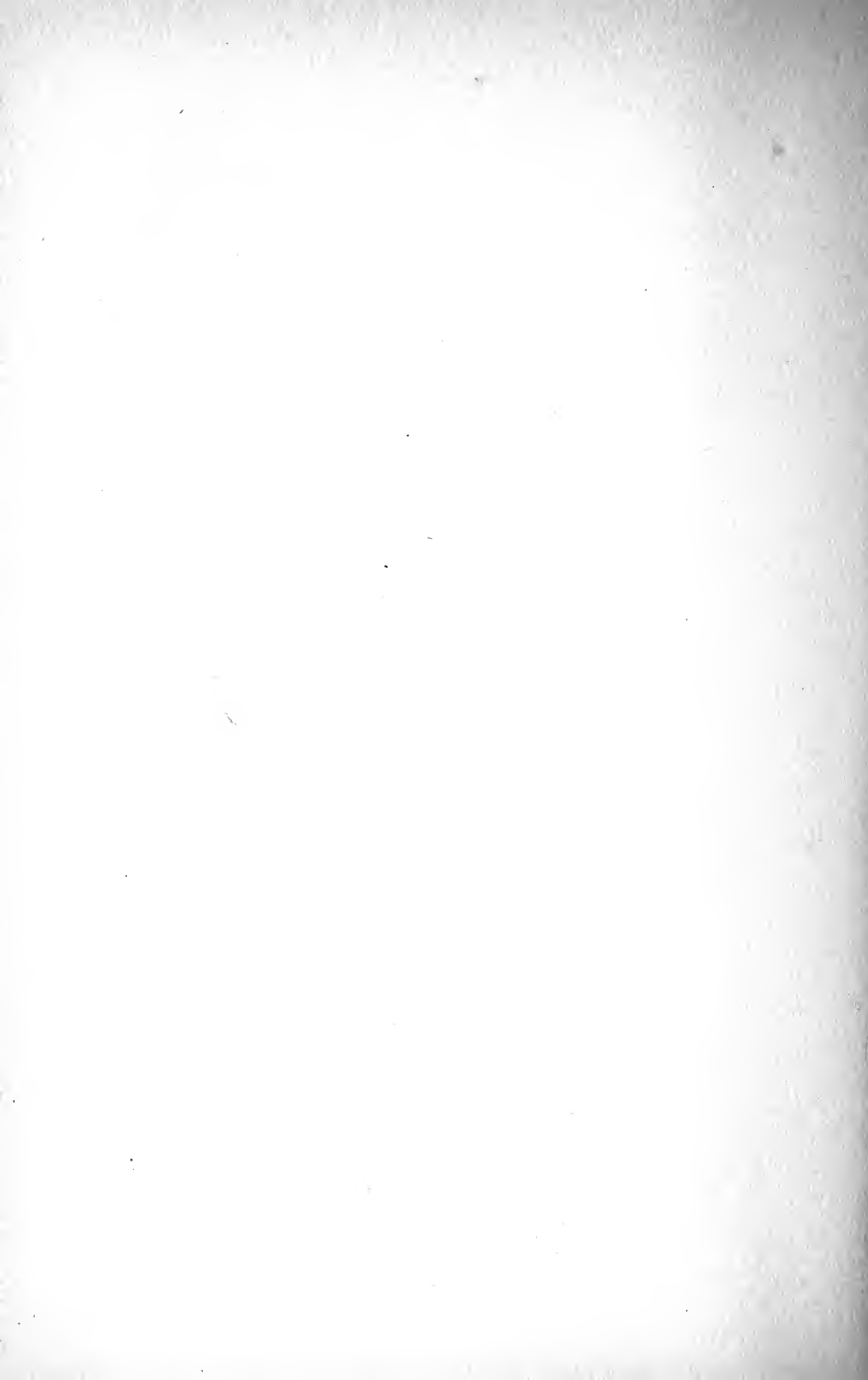
tians more zealous for the conquest of sin, and if they knit together the hearts of Christians, they are worthy. But faiths that fail in these respects, which are the mere survivals of a distant past, are discrediting themselves in the fact. Love, and trust, and zeal for the Master; these are marks of a Gospel that the Master will bless.

3. The student in this new age is alert for the best there is for himself and for the world. He wants the ripest scholarship, the most inspiring books, and the most uplifting influences of every sort. When it comes to faith he wants that also to be the very best. And so when he turns to the Gospel he insists that the brand offered him be of the holiest and most vital sort. To him therefore the conception of the Gospel which is here presented should make particular appeal. The ripe, the spiritual religion of Jesus, free from cant, and sham, and all vain pretense is worthy of his heartiest allegiance. This new wine of the Master he may put into the newest bottles of love and service.

Some excellent people are glad when they can squeeze themselves into some exclusive circle of Christians which prides itself on its ability to shut other Christians outside. Not so I. They rejoice when they imagine that they have discovered a path to the kingdom over which they can set up a sign, "Private Way." Not so I. Some would picture the Gospel as cold and harsh and forbidding, and full of restrictions and repellant prohibitions. All that was of Judaism, and of that I want nothing for me or mine.

General Banks of Massachusetts once told of a man who was struggling in the icy waters of the

Merrimac River. Some ran to his relief and pushed out a plank which he convulsively grasped, only to lose his hold and slip back into the river. When he came up he grasped it again, but slipped off the second time. When he came up next he called out, "For heaven's sake give me the wooden end of the plank." The end they had turned to him was covered with ice and no wonder that he could not hold fast. So some do with the faith. For the world's salvation they thrust out commandments, and ordinances, and burdens, and law, and dogma, and sinners grasp them only to slip back into the depths. But may we learn, all of us, to offer to the world the real Gospel of the Master, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the vital Gospel of power, which grips men fast and makes them fruitful in every good word and work, to the Lord's great glory.



## **FAITH'S HEAVENLY TREASURE**



## XII.

### FAITH'S HEAVENLY TREASURE

ST. MATTHEW 6: 20—"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

A COMMON interpretation put upon this passage is to the effect that our Lord is expressing condemnation of thrift and enterprise, and is warning His hearers of the soul peril that results from the ownership of property. To those who take this view the argument runs much in this fashion. Beware of thieves. There are many rascals at large in the world. Their fingers are itching to hypothecate your bonds, to water your stocks, and to make ducks and drakes with any of your possessions that they can lay hands on. If you lodge your securities in a safe that is warranted fire-proof and burglar-proof, they will pick the lock or blow off the door. Or if you deposit your cash in the bank, what with carelessness in the directorate, cupidity at the desk and violence in the vaults, you are sure to lose every dollar. Consequently it is vanity to waste your time in saving money.

Or again, there are moths, troublesome creatures that delight to ravage your most cherished belongings. They will gnaw at your richest carpets, revel in your costliest furs, and make havoc

of your spare coats and gowns. Regardless of the rarity of the fabric, the perfection of the design, or of its value in the market, they will bite, devour, and destroy. Because there are moths, to expend cash on fine raiment is a waste, for which reason let all the milliners and tailors go out of business.

Or again, age and decay are enlisted in a rank conspiracy for the destruction of all the products of the human hand. You build a home that you have been looking forward to for years, but before the rafters are spread overhead disintegration is at work below. Your columns of iron will rust and your pillars of wood will moulder. Your statues of marble and granite will crumble into dust. All your triumphal arches, all your elaborate bridges that bind your cities together, all your marble palaces will presently yield to the tooth of destroying time. And so the wise man will have nothing to do with them. Let them all go! Put aside the notion of having any treasures on the earth!

Precisely that is the interpretation that some very good people will put on this passage of our Lord's preaching.

But to be wholly frank with you, I must confess that I have no confidence that our Lord was giving any such instruction.

We are to remember that there are tides and currents in human opinion, just as there are tides and currents in the ocean. Among these tides and currents are some that flow out of the monkish life of the Middle Ages. Some of those good monks contracted the idea that all the pleasure, all



the joy, all the good of this world must of need be bad. Their thought was crystallized in those lines of Thomas Moore,

This world is all a fleeting show,  
For man's illusion given,

and they fondly imagined if irreligious people were ever to be attracted toward religion that it must be by making them discontented with everything that the world has to offer. To be good they must be taught to be poor, and to be happy in poverty as the best estate possible. But I doubt if the Lord desired sinners to be exercised after this method, and I doubt further whether such exercise is profitable for anybody. There are wonderful beauties in this world which God has made, and what is the use of cheating any one into thinking otherwise? There is glory in God's beautiful sunshine. There is a divine purity breathing from the lily, and a divine blush that lingers on the cheek of the rose, and every one knows it. The earth with all its weaknesses and miseries can be the abode of precious joys, and every one knows that too.

But aside from that, as I read the Gospels, I never discover that Jesus expresses disparagement with the handiwork of God in the formation and the management of the world. On the contrary He is ever manifesting delight in nature. He calls attention to the glory of the sunset sky. He listens for the song of the bird and watches the sparrow in his swooping flight. He catches the splendor of the roses of Sharon, and rejoices in the profit that the husbandman gathers from his

fields when they are white to the harvest. Nowhere in the Gospels is there any approval of poverty as a blessed estate, or any commendation of unthrift or of needless waste. Far from letting things take care of themselves, after Jesus had fed the five thousand He bade His disciples "*gather up the fragments that nothing be lost.*" Nowhere does He say that nothing is better than something, or that the poor is better than the rich. If Christianity is under obligation to declare it wrong to gather and own property, what an opportunity the Lord let slip when He was talking with Nicodemus, the millionaire of Jerusalem! No. Monkish mediaevalism was all astray as to the nature of the faith, and as to what the Lord wished His disciples to become. Christ was never a class man, to puff up the poor man at the expense of his wealthier brother, or the rich man at the expense of the poor. He certainly gave more cautions to the rich than He did to the poor, because the rich needed the cautions, and because the poor could hardly help their poverty if they tried. But He well knew that both stations have their temptations, and so He met men simply as men, all on the same level, and with no suggestion of setting class against class. To rich or to poor He gave the same sound counsel to set all treasures at their true value. The treasures are good, but there is choice in the manner of holding them, and also a difference in results growing out of the manner of holding them. They can be used on the earth, but the earth is not the best place for their safe-keeping. The earth is not on the one hand a vale of tears, but on the other hand it must not be

mistaken as a permanent treasure place, or as a permanent home place. This is so because as a treasure place it is insecure, while as a home place it is soon to perish altogether. And just this is the content of the lesson, that while man may hold some treasure here, and have honest enjoyment in possessing it, after all whatever he wishes to keep and enjoy forever he must store in a safer place of deposit, a place where no shock of time and no changes of nature can intervene to hinder holding them in everlasting possession.

*Treasures.* Lay up for yourselves treasures. The Savior here commends honorable industry and care-taking so far as to draw an analogy between success in business and success in religion. In object these aims are different, but in method He would suggest that they are much the same. In both there must be attention to conditions, and no little wise planning and wisely directed effort. I am wondering why it is that so many, who comprehend thoroughly the necessity for concentrative energy, when business matters are at the fore, are failing altogether to realize the importance of the same quality in the affairs of religion. There is no question about the bank: it must have sharp oversight. The books must be all balanced to a penny before the clerks can leave, even if they have to stay half the night. All notes due must be collected at once. Paper presented for discount must be strictly first-class, and be endorsed by responsible men. Investments must be gilt-edged, they must be interest-bearing, and if there is any appearance of possible depreciation they must be disposed of before the bank suffers loss. No stone

is to lie unturned when turning it would be for the advantage of the bank.

And your growing merchant puts his heart into his business. He has one eye on the market, so as to purchase the most attractive goods, and at the lowest figure; and his other eye he has on his stock so as to clear the counters of unsalable patterns. And he must watch his customers to see that they have a good commercial rating, and then he must be prompt in collecting his accounts. No one can trust his business, no matter how long it has been established, to run itself, for while it is running itself it is running into the ground. And yet while all this is so well understood in secular affairs, when it comes to the things that pertain to the kingdom of God it is quite common for people to imagine these must thrive, whether taken care of or not, simply because they are affairs of religion.

A Sunday School some suppose must prosper simply because it is a Sunday School, and a church because it is a church. But that is pure delusion. Test the matter with a vine, say an ivy vine. You plant it beside the church, and possibly you may consecrate it with some ceremony so as to make it a sort of a holy vine. And because it is a holy vine, you let it take care of itself. Once in a while you think of it, but on the whole you give it neglect. You mean to water it, but do not, and the sun bakes the earth about its roots and scorches the tender leaf. You mean to train it up the wall, but you do not, and it reaches out its tendrils but gets no support, and so when you come it is all twisted in a disorderly mass on the ground. You intend to protect it from injury, but you do not.

and so the swine come and trample it, and root about it and tear it up. And when you waken to the havoc that has been wrought shall you complain of Providence that it neglected its vine? But God was ready to protect it, and He would have protected it, had you but done the part allotted to you.

And so there is a tender vine, the Sunday School. And Sunday Schools prosper, not merely because they are Sunday Schools, but because of faithful officers and teachers, and because of faithful scholars, who feel the interest of personal obligation: who are faithful in attendance for themselves, and who are faithful in securing the attendance of others.

And there is that other tender vine, the church. Churches prosper not merely because they are churches, but because the conditions of success are met in their administration; because of earnest and pious officers, because of a zealous and alert membership, who love the Lord's work and are not afraid to have all the world see that they love it with their whole hearts. To build up a church there is to be a live and a consecrated membership. Consecration and energy in the membership will multiply a good pastor's power. Consecration and energy in the membership will push forward the work with an inefficient pastor, or even with no pastor at all.

Now when we see so clearly that live methods and business conditions are essential in trade, and are equally necessary in the general management of religious affairs, we should readily apprehend the bearing of the same principles on the religious

life of the individual. For a man to have treasure in heaven there must be a laying up of treasure, a giving of thought and attention and application, and regard must be paid to the conditions that will bring about the result desired. Peter had this in mind when he said, "*Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*" As we glance at salvation from the earth side we note that it is intensely personal work. The gospels and the epistles liken it to a race, to putting on the armor, to fighting in a battle, and to the glorying in the fruits of victory. God sets wide open the gate of His everlasting mercy, but He asks of each disciple that he enter the gate. The Master leads to the fountain of the water of life, but each must lean and drink for himself. The gift of God in salvation is free, without money and without price. Any man who is willing to fashion his course after Jesus in submission to the will of God may come. And here appears the use of the world as a portal to the coming life of the hereafter. While here we are on probation, as one may say, and God is making trial of us to discover who will accept the conditions of the new life, and prove his fitness for it. I knew once a bright young fellow who applied for employment in the establishment of one of our great merchants. To be connected with that house was assurance of a career that should satisfy any moderate ambition. But my young friend did not enter that business at the top. For two weeks he was put at all sorts of tasks, some of them menial and disagreeable enough. He could not see why he should be set to washing windows and scrubbing the floor, when there were

other people about the place who were hired for such jobs; but as he was determined to stay with the house he took it all good humoredly and did every task as well as he could. But all the time he was under the eye of the head of the house, who was testing him to see whether he was to prove a good man or a time-server. And so God is proving us by our faithfulness in moral and religious duty. To be faithful here and construct a noble religious character here, is to assure having a religious character when we come to the place where all character must be religious. But to possess this religious character implies self-restraint and self-conquest. Solomon had the right of it when he wrote in the proverb, "*Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city.*" O this self-conquest! It means being gentle and loving and kind when passion is still, and it means most of all being gentle and loving and kind when passion if it had its way would rage like a wild beast. It means obedience to the call of duty when obedience is a pleasant thing; walking in shady groves and among springing flowers; but most of all it means obedience to duty when the path is beset with dangers, when the weary hand wants rest and the troubled heart is shrinking with forecast of possible defeat. To be firm and true then is to be sublime. To obey then is to be like the Son of God, who in the shadows and agony of Gethsemane exclaims, "*Thy will be done.*" Conquest like that is assurance of heaven, of having treasure in heaven.

*Treasure in heaven.* Here our Lord is reminding us of what we all know full well, and yet what

we often need to be reminded of, that these riches of earth which we set so much store by, and which have such possibilities of power and comfort, may be riches here and yet may not be riches in heaven. It is a fundamental principle of political economy that values depend upon uses and demand. There is value in a house if some one wishes it for a home; but when no one wishes it, when it stands year after year tenantless and eating itself up in insurance and taxes, it may be worse to own it than not to own it. There is value in a piece of paper when some government stamps it with its promise to pay. And yet there is a difference. Some time ago there came over the sea one of those stalwart peasants of Northern Europe, the kind of immigrant that the country welcomes. When he landed at Castle Garden, which was then where immigrants were received, he found that the foreign money that he brought with him had to be changed into funds current in America. And while walking about in Battery Park a kind stranger offered to change his money for him at a slight brokerage. So they made the exchange, the immigrant paying over the money of his government, and the accommodating friend paying in return a pile of nice, crisp, new bills which had all the appearance of being good money. But when the new-comer tried to buy something with his fine new money he found that no one would take it. It was Confederate money, the promise to pay of a treasury that no longer existed.

And much that man sets heart on here, much that he might sell his soul to buy, has no currency in heaven. I have heard of a steamer that was



foundering in the Pacific Ocean. She had struck a hidden reef and was slowly settling down, and the captain had ordered the crew and the passengers into the boats. But one man would not go with the others, and after the boats were well away he ran from cabin to cabin, gathering up the treasures which the passengers had abandoned. He found bars of silver and gold; watches and chains of gold, and brooches and ear jewels, and all this he put into a pile on the deck and then sat down beside them while the ship went on settling down and down. For once in his life he was rich, rich for a half hour, and he chose to perish in the midst of his sudden wealth. Was a man who would do that quite out of his mind, unbalanced by his greed of wealth? But then are not the others unbalanced also, who gather and gather on the deck of this fast sinking ship, this present life, unmindful of the other life, so much richer and broader, to which the life of the present is as a passing day? And when all these fine plans for accumulation succeed, when wealth pours in upon its possessor like a flood, what avails it after all? What are strings of pearls, ropes on ropes of pearls, in the sight of heaven, whose gate is a single pearl? What is the sparkle of the diamond in that city whose foundations blaze with all manner of precious stones? You remember that John in the Revelation tells that the "*street of the city was pure gold.*" How is that to be interpreted, the golden street, the gems for foundations, and the gates of pearl? It is not to be imagined for a moment that John was speaking of these as realities. He was presenting a figure through which

he meant to teach that God dwells in the splendor of a magnificence which we cannot comprehend, and moreover that up there all that men count as symbols of riches are of such slight concern that one might be making gates of them, or walls of a city, or a pavement to be trampled under foot. And when this is conceded how is it to stand with any soul that devotes itself wholly to the present life, who amasses great treasures of the kind that is valuable here, but who has put away no treasure in heaven? For this world he may possess mansions, and lands, and railways, and every luxury that vast wealth can buy. But at last old age comes creeping upon him like a thief in the night, yet with this difference that it never stops its creeping by day or by night, till at length the hour strikes that is to mark his departure out of the world. He leaves his beautiful mansion to dwell in the narrow house. Out of all his acres all he has now is the meager six foot by two. And the world treasures all are left behind. Somebody else whips his fast trotters up the avenue. Some one else carries the combination of his big safe, and clips his coupons. Some one else collects the dividends on his investments. Of all that he had he now has nothing, for across that narrow sea he may carry nothing, not even the two coins that hold down his eyes. How now is riches better than poverty? The rich and the poor lie down together, and the Lord is the maker of them all. Then it is evident that he only is rich who has taken the pains to lay up treasure in heaven.

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. No hard task that when one sets himself to it dili-

gently. It has been argued that any one can have anything in the world, provided he devotes himself to that one thing with all his powers. That may be relatively true with earthly concerns, but it is positively true that whoever devotes himself to laying up heavenly treasure with the help of the Savior is certain to succeed.

Such treasure is laid up by active faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Call the Christian life a journey; then faith is the first station, the point of departure. All Christian teaching and all Christian living is based upon faith. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,*" that is the affirmative pledge, of which the converse is this, "*Without faith it is impossible to please God.*" What faith accomplishes we learn from the apostle John who declares, "*This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.*" Heaven itself is the reward of the faithful, for the Lord has given the promise, "*Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life.*" But faith has this power because it enables the disciple to see how the other life touches this, how life reaches into life, how earth life flows right on into the heavenly life. Our Lord one day touched the eyes of a blind man and the heavenly work commenced, but at the start the man saw dimly, for he saw men as trees walking. And the world sight is blind, but faith gives the open vision and we see how all things of to-day are affecting eternity. A base act to-day leads to other base acts, and the series goes on, and there is no stopping it till God stretches forth His hand. And it is the same with acts that are high and noble.

They live. Men die, but their good deeds live after them. In all our great cities we have the central station for generating the electricity which illuminates the streets and buildings. Some one moves a switch and the dynamos revolve and a thrill courses over the wires and almost instantly there is a blaze of light wherever the wires communicate. The unskilful might see only the turning of the switch, and nothing of the effects beyond. And so some who are unskilled in conduct note only our isolated acts, but the wise understand how every act here sets impulses moving in the other life and so in heaven itself.

We lay up treasure of love in heaven. Every Christian who lives in the spirit of Jesus is growing rich in the friendships of heaven. Could we but know it there is nothing which we do which can escape the searching eyes of God's angels. They see all who are truly Christ's servants, and they learn to love them? They smile upon all righteousness and meekness and gentleness: and so when some pure soul that the angels have learned to admire and love ascends from earth to glory, I am sure that it will not have to tarry there long for an introduction. The angels will come trooping about a soul like that and will say, "Here is our friend, we are glad to greet you."

And acts of faith can be laid up in heaven by transfer. When you travel abroad you do not attempt to carry all your cash on your person, for you might lose or suffer from robbery. So you buy a letter of credit, and when you are in need of funds in London or Constantinople you go to some

banker, where your credit has preceded you, and you draw at your pleasure. And so one can transfer the riches of earth to the other side. He that hath and gives to the Lord is laying up treasure in Heaven. A sanctuary is to be erected to the Lord's glory. The people who assemble on the Lord's day have been prospered and they enjoy their comfortable homes. They desire to honor the Lord with their substance, and so they meet together and determine to beautify the place of His sanctuary. And they bring their choice offerings, the rich out of their wealth, and the poor out of their narrow resources, but all with glad spirit, happy to make sacrifice for the Lord. And when their Sabbath home is erected, and they join in song and praise, extolling the name of the Lord, who can doubt that they have been laying up treasure in heaven?

It is the same with the outflow of generous piety in loving assistance to the poor and needy. In this hard struggle for living, while some prosper others stumble by the way. They may be worthy and industrious, but circumstances are against them. A harvest may have failed, or there have been widespread business reverses, or there have come sickness and death to the breadwinner, and the stricken ones do not know where to turn. In such case the Christian finds opportunity. Evidently it is his privilege to give from his abundance for the help of the distressed. Blessed, thrice blessed the hand of charity which gives, and gives so unobtrusively that the left hand knows nothing of the right hand's action. Cash handled in that way goes through the clearing-house of heaven, for the

Scripture says, "*He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.*" And so the kind heart lays up treasure in heaven.

Such treasure is laid up in our support of the mission work in the foreign field. Possibly those who give most in this service are the missionaries themselves, for they bid farewell to home and kindred, and they go out, their lives in their hand, to dwell among strange races, apart from their most cherished associations, exposed to strange diseases, and even when they are in the best of health compelled to the doom of a lonesomeness that we who have friends near us can hardly conceive of.

We who cannot go with them can help them with material assistance. We can cheer them by the expression of sympathy, backed by the financial contributions that make sympathy effective. I am thinking now of what a single fifty-dollar bill, or its equivalent, can accomplish when it is translated in this manner into the life of the mission service. Fifty dollars, a new organ for the service of song. Fifty dollars, a new set of song books for the mission chapel. Fifty dollars, that is the support of a native Bible woman for an entire year. Fifty dollars, that means a hundred things that will comfort and bless the mission worker on the far side of the earth, a hundred things that will tell for the ingathering of souls for years to come. And so in all these gifts of material treasure, the millions that go for the endowment of colleges and hospitals, the millions that go for the home work of the Gospel, the millions that are busy in uplifting the condition of the

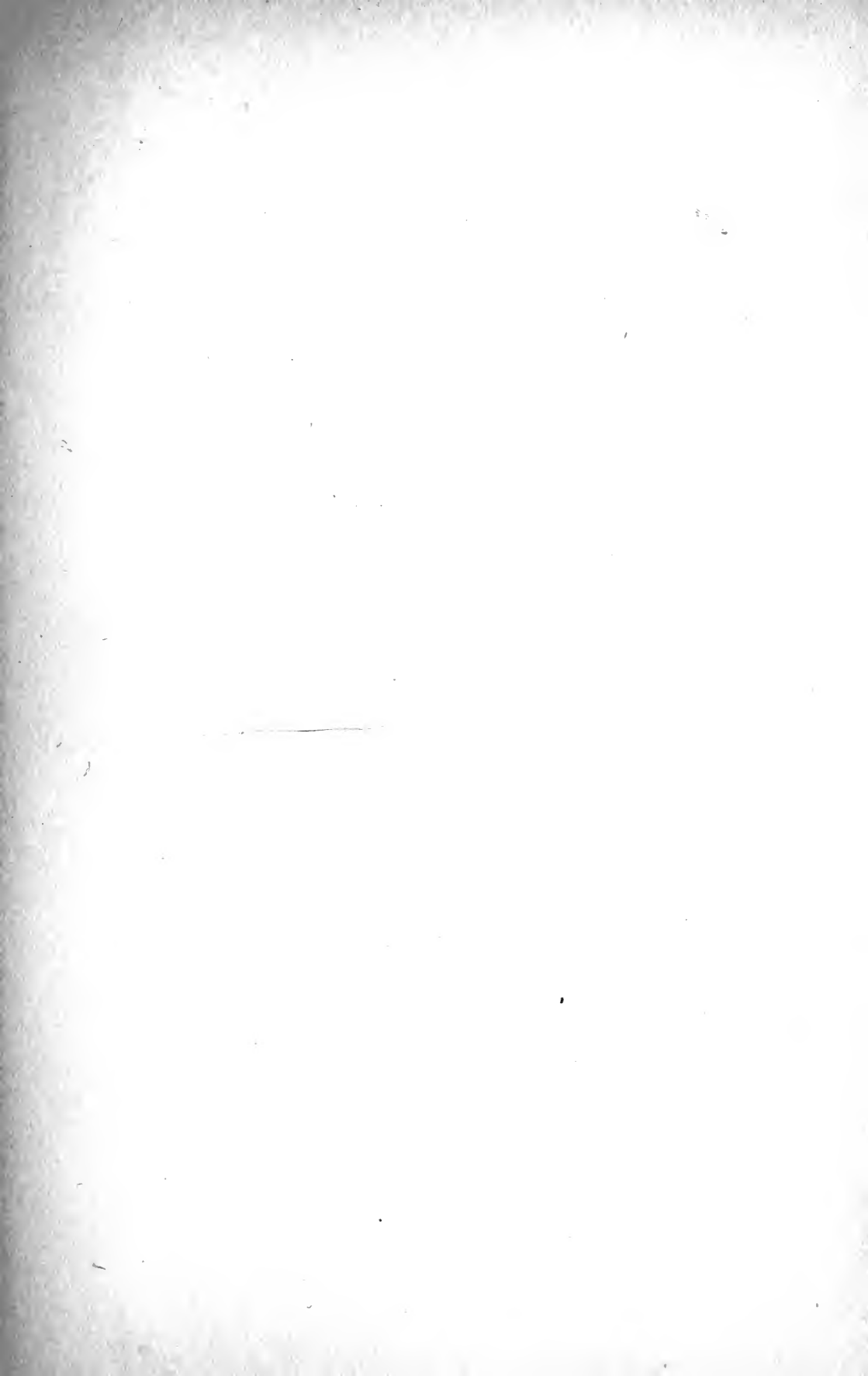
poor, and the individual gifts, small or great, when given with overflowing love for the Savior, are treasures laid up in heaven.

And then there is heart treasure in heaven. We have lost loved ones who have gone on before. We think of them, for while they are unseen, memory recalls their dear faces, or their tone of voice, or their familiar gesture, or their loving word. And because they lived truly we wish to live truly so that we may be with them altogether by and by. And so with much thought of them, and of God, and of the dear Savior, our conversation is in heaven. Our earth life, while we may enjoy its comforts, is the lesser thing and is tributary to that which is to come. And in this manner our thoughts and activities may be so tempered with heaven that we may dwell here in the heavenly atmosphere. Living like that is living for heaven, and our treasure is in heaven. I am thinking this moment of the riches laid up in that storehouse of the Great King. All the saints have their treasure there. Each of you may have treasure there. Wise you are if you daily lay up more treasure, and by system. For then you have clear title to the mansions in the skies. It is not for long till we come into possession. Day by day our friends are passing, and we go also :

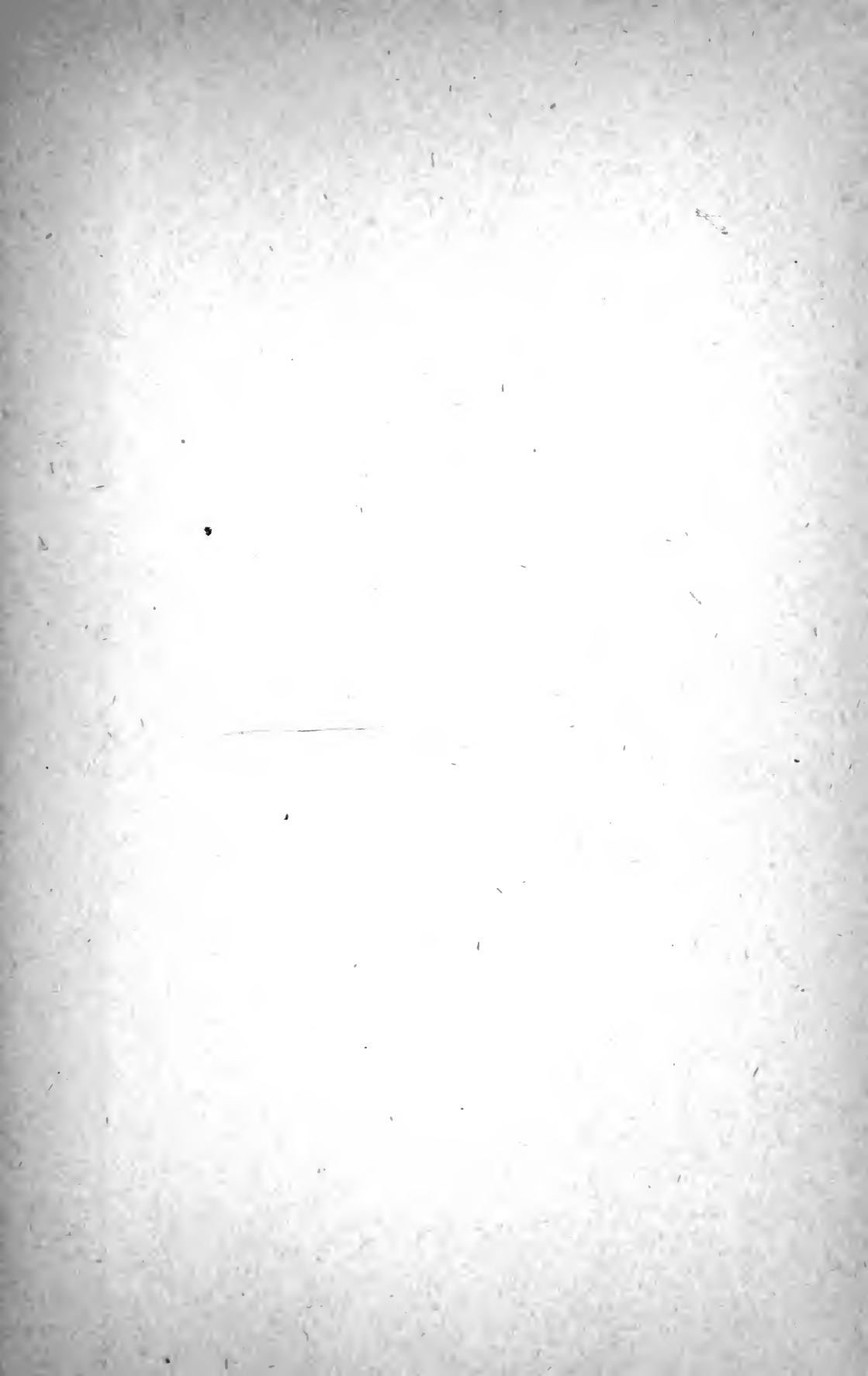
Dim shadows gather thickly round,  
And up the misty stairs they climb,  
The cloudy stair that upward leads,  
To where the golden portals shine:  
Round which the kneeling spirits wait  
The opening of the golden gate.











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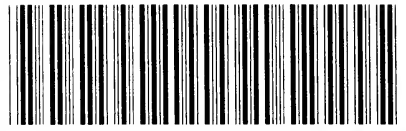
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